



Persuasion is a Process, Not a Magic Bullet

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People often forget that persuasion is a process rather than an on/off switch. Audiences aren't unconvinced one moment and suddenly committed the next because you've found a verbal "magic bullet." Moving them to action involves a gradual and sequential approach. You'll be much more effective persuading prospects to take action when you implement the principle of "psychological progression." This organizing principle divides a presentation into discrete steps designed to move listeners toward a desired outcome. Each step serves a specific purpose in the process of persuasion by creating a mental state in the minds of the audience. Here are the five steps, along with an example key message for each.

Listen. A presenter's first task involves rising above all the mental clutter in the audience's mind to be heard. Techniques to capture attention include humor, narratives, uniqueness, props and provocative statements. *I'm sorry to have to inform all of you that you're dying. In fact, we are. It's going to happen to everyone eventually. But I hope it doesn't happen to you before you've planned for it because I'm sincerely worried about your family.*

Feel. Next, you must make them feel some pain or inadequacy in their current state of affairs. Its purpose is to create an appetite for resolution. *Have you prepared for the unexpected? Could your family go on living in the manner to which they've become accustomed? Would they be able to attend to meet financial responsibilities, to get the education they need and be able to live free of worry, stress and debt?*

See: You must then satisfy the appetite with your recommendation for action. The purpose is to create congruence between their pain and your solution. In other words, you're showing them how to solve the problem you've made them aware of. *When you're prepared for the future, I can guarantee you'll never have to worry about your family being taken care of, ever. Our policies solve exactly those kinds of problems.*

Believe. They must also believe your solution will work. You create this belief through examples, case studies and analogies. This step serves to remove any doubts or skepticism both about your solution and about your personal ability to deliver it. *For over 120 years, we've been providing peace of mind and a sound plan for the future. And, in the tens of thousands of policies we've written, we've never had a claim turned down. In fact, our customer satisfaction ratings are the highest in the industry, bar none.*

Act. The final step involves getting the audience to act on your recommendations. One of the keys to an effective call to action is not overwhelming the audience with choice. The fewer

options available, the more likely they are to act on one. *You can get started immediately by going to our Website and using the no obligation interactive calculator to customize a plan for your specific needs.*

Three keys will help increase your effectiveness: First, the order in which you introduce these steps is crucial to their success. At each stage, people must experience the previous step before moving on to the next. The effect is cumulative. Second, focus less on what you say and more on the intellectual and emotional state you're trying to create in the minds of the audience. Third, don't neglect the presentation of these messages. They must be delivered in a way that reinforces your sincerity and authenticity. In addition to a higher conversion rate, organizing your presentation on the principle of psychological progression guarantees prospects will be more committed to action.



Joe Sommerville shows professional services firms how to increase visibility, enhance credibility and close more business. Download the first chapter of RainMaking Presentations: How to Grow Your Business by Leveraging Your Expertise at www.RainMakingPresentations.com.