

The Art of Influence

*How to become more persuasive, overcome resistance,
and get stronger buy-in for your ideas*



By: Michael Beck
Executive Coach & Strategist

INTRODUCTION

Mastering the art of persuading people is essential to achieving great results. As a leader, one of the main responsibilities is to develop sound strategies. But no matter how good a strategy is, you'll only get great results when people get enthused and believe in your ideas.



Over the years, I've seen many leaders resort to one of two approaches in an attempt to "persuade" people to get behind an idea.

The first approach is to argue the facts to make their case. (This is especially popular with analytical people.) The thinking behind this is that if you present enough facts and do it with enough passion, the other person will eventually come around to your way of thinking. Unfortunately, this approach rarely works.

The second approach leaders sometimes resort to is to use "the hammer". By that, I mean that because the leader is in charge, they can always resort to saying, "We're going to do it this way because I say we are." And because they're the boss, everyone agrees to do it that way. The problem is that there is a big difference between compliance and commitment. The results achieved by a committed team are far greater than those gained by a team that is simply compliant.

The key to gaining buy-in for and commitment to an idea or strategy lies with understanding how people make "buying" decisions. Although many people think that decisions are made based on evaluating the facts and features, that's not quite true. People buy emotionally.



It's not that facts and features don't matter. They do. But the truth is that people buy a thing or an idea because of how they *feel* about it. Once they make that decision, they'll use the facts and features to rationalize their decision.

Therefore, the key to persuading people and gaining buy-in is to shift their perspective so they feel your idea is a good one.

Over my 20+ years as an Executive Coach & Strategist, I've worked with senior executives around the country. I've groomed leaders for advancement, and I've helped good leaders become even more effective.

Part of my success with clients has been my ability to change their perspective so they see things differently.

Another part of my success in helping leaders become more effective is by helping them learn how to change the perspective of others so they get buy-in for their ideas.



This whitepaper covers some important and effective strategies for changing someone's perspective, having greater influence, overcoming resistance, and getting stronger buy-in for your ideas. All of which leads to better results.



In this whitepaper, we'll cover the importance of:

- **FAB – Features, Advantages and Benefits**
- **The 6 Influence Factors**
- **The Use of Questions**
- **The Use of Analogies**

Features, Advantages And Benefits (FAB)

We'd like to think that people make decisions based on the facts, but the truth is that people buy emotionally and rationalize their decision with the facts.

Let's use car/truck buying as an example:

FEATURES	ADVANTAGES	BENEFITS
Good Horsepower	Vehicle Goes Faster	Feeling of Freedom
Good Towing Capacity	Able to Pull More	Pull Bigger Toys
Good Legroom	Able to Stretch Out	Arrive Relaxed
Good Quality	Lasts Longer	Smart Investment
Good Safety	Safer Than Competitors	Peace of Mind

In the chart above, is a list of possible features. These are the facts. When someone is considering which vehicle to purchase, they look at the features/facts and then reflect on the advantages of these features.

But it's the benefits those advantages provide that influence their buying decision. For instance, someone may choose one car over another because they love the sound system. All the other features matter, but it's the way they feel about that sound system that causes them to buy that car.

The 6 Influence Factors

There are six factors that can help influence someone
to take action or buy-into an idea.

(They come from a great book called, *"Influence"* by Robert Cialdini.)

1. **Scarcity** – Scarcity is the idea that something is either in limited supply or is only available for a limited time. Some people will act simply due to the fear of missing out.
2. **Reciprocity** – Reciprocity occurs when someone receives something for free. It can create the feeling of an obligation to reciprocate and give something back or do something for the other person.
3. **Likeability** – Likeability pertains to the dynamic that takes place when the other person is likeable. Some people will act or buy-in simply because they like the other person.
4. **Authority** – Authority is the concept that if someone the other person respects says it's a good thing, it must be a good thing.
5. **Commitment/Consistency** – This dynamic occurs when a person makes a commitment. Once they suggest they will do something, they are more likely to follow through than if you tell them to do it. (This is especially useful in effective delegation.)
6. **Social Proof** – Social Proof is the concept that people will tend to buy your idea if others just like them say it's a good idea. It's why testimonials are so effective.



The Use of Questions

Asking the right questions can be extremely effective in persuading people. The key to asking the “right” questions is to be curious rather than to be challenging. Questions need to be worded and delivered in a manner that doesn’t cause the other person to become defensive.



As a simple example, consider two people who see things differently. If one of them asks, “How can you say that?”, it would clearly put the other person on the defensive. A more effective way of starting the conversation is by taking a “curiosity” approach.

For example, you could ask, “OK. Help me understand why you see it this way. Why do you think this will work?”

In doing that, you avoid challenging them and instead, you’re asking them to better explain their position. One of two things will come of that. Either you’ll discover their approach has merit, or you’ll see where their thinking or judgment is flawed. Once you have that insight, you can either ask follow-up questions to gain more clarity or ask additional questions to shift how they see things.

The Use of Analogies



When you're trying to shift someone's view about a situation or an idea, analogies can be a powerful tool. Arguing your point by discussing the specific situation at hand usually causes people to defend their position. They're emotionally invested in the outcome.

But when you use an analogy – an example from a different industry or different context – people can stay emotionally neutral to the story. Using an analogy that people can relate to evokes an emotional response – one that the two of you can usually agree on. Using the right analogy can make your point very effectively and instantly shift the other person's point of view. It pays to master the art of storytelling.

THE ART OF INFLUENCE

In summary, you'll be more persuasive and have greater influence when you:



- ✓ Become clear on the benefits of your idea
- ✓ Use influence factors to help persuade
- ✓ Use questions to shift perspective
- ✓ Use analogies to overcome objections

SPECIAL OFFER

For the last 20 years, I've been helping leaders become more persuasive and get better results.

I'm offering a free one-on-one session to strategize about any challenges you're dealing with regarding influence and getting stronger buy-in for your ideas. You'll come away with new insights and useful ideas.

Schedule your free strategy session:

<https://calendly.com/elicitingexcellence/strategy-session>



ELICITING EXCELLENCE

"Bringing Out the Best in People"™

Eliciting Excellence
Portland, OR
503-505-4664
www.ElicitingExcellence.com



Michael Beck
Executive Coach
& Strategist

www.ElicitingExcellence.com