



THE POWER OF PERSUASION: HOW TO INFLUENCE OTHERS

**PRESENTED BY YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
AND WORKLIFE PROGRAMS**

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Federal
Occupational
Health

OBJECTIVES

- Define persuasion and review its core principles
- Highlight key strategies for influencing others effectively
- Describe the traits of influential and persuasive communicators
- Apply practical tools and techniques to real-world situations
- Build a personal action plan to enhance persuasion skills



SECTION 1:

THE PRINCIPLES OF PERSUASION

WHAT IS PERSUASION?

Definition

- The process of guiding people toward the adoption of an idea, attitude, or action through spoken, written, or visual messages.
- A form of social influence that relies on reasoning, emotional appeals, or argumentation, while maintaining the recipient's free choice to change their own mind.

Benefits

- Fosters interest and connection
- Establishes rapport
- Creates mutual benefit and long-term trust

TRAITS OF AN INFLUENTIAL PERSON

- **Emanates authenticity**
 - Comfortable in their own skin
- **Seeks common ground**
 - Finds shared interests naturally
- **Listens with empathy**
 - Connects with diverse perspectives
- **Trustworthy**
 - Appears credible and reliable
- **Open to feedback**
 - Genuinely interested in input
- **Balanced communication**
 - Blends talk, connection, and substance



TRAITS OF PERSUASIVE SPEAKERS

- **Skilled audience engagement:** Captivates and maintains attention
- **High self-awareness:** Understands strengths and blind spots
- **Asks probing questions:** Stimulates discussion
- **Passionate delivery:** Shows enthusiasm for ideas
- **Open mindset:** Listens to and appreciates alternative viewpoints
- **Conversational:** Talks *with* the audience, not *at* it
- **Shares stories:** Uses examples to illustrate points

KNOW WHO TO INFLUENCE

- Identify those whose assistance or support is critical
- Engage all contacts, including allies, critics, and new connections
- Engage key players to prioritize efforts
- Tailor messages and strategies to those involved
- Maintain efficiency and focus



SECTION 2:

THE PERSUASION FRAMEWORK

KEYS TO INFLUENCING OTHERS

THE PERSUASION FRAMEWORK



Prepare

- Know your audience
- Identify their WIIFM (What's in it for me?)



Connect

- Build rapport
- Match and mirror



Deliver

- Be authentic
- Address objections



Close

- Secure commitment
- Follow through



KEYS TO INFLUENCING OTHERS

1. PREPARE

- **Define your goals**
 - What do you want others to think, feel, or do by the end?
- **Anticipate your audience's wants, needs, and concerns**
 - Consider their motivations, constraints, and potential sticking points
 - Think about questions they may have and how you might respond
- **Craft your message**
 - Identify the one idea or takeaway that you want them to remember



KEYS TO INFLUENCING OTHERS

2. CONNECT

- **Earn attention and trust before you try to persuade**
 - Start with common ground, such as shared goals, values, or challenges
- **Show genuine interest**
 - Ask questions, listen actively, and recap what you hear
- **Match and mirror**
 - Respectfully align with (not copy) their communication style
- **Use emotional intelligence**
 - Read the room, adjust your tone, and acknowledge feelings



KEYS TO INFLUENCING OTHERS

3. DELIVER

- **Communicate your message clearly and concisely**
 - Lead with the headline — don't bury your main point
 - Rambling dilutes influence
- **Be transparent and authentic**
 - People can sense insincerity
- **Emphasize the benefits to generate buy-in**
 - Highlight specific advantages, positive aspects, and improvements
- **Mind your body language**
 - Convey confidence through eye contact, posture, pacing, and vocal tone



KEYS TO INFLUENCING OTHERS

4. CLOSE

- **Restate the takeaway**
 - Underpin the message you want them to remember
- **Confirm next steps**
 - Outline the actions you want them to take and by when
 - Commit to what will you do next and by when
- **Check for alignment and remove any remaining friction**
 - Ask, “How does this land for you?” or “Does this help you understand the bigger picture?”
 - Address any residual concerns or objections before final commitment
- **End on a positive note**
 - Show appreciation, offer encouragement, and reiterate the shared purpose

EXAMPLE:

WHEN PERSUASION FAILED

You tried to convince a colleague to adopt a new process

What went wrong:

- Assumed they'd understand the benefits without asking for their concerns
- Used technical jargon they didn't understand
- Pushed too hard when they showed resistance

Lesson: Listen first, adapt your approach, and know when to pause

EXAMPLE:

WHEN PERSUASION WORKED

You needed approval for a new project initiative from your manager

- Researched your manager's priorities to gain WIIFM efficiency
- Matched their direct communication style
- Led with data that shows a time savings of 20%
- Addressed budget concerns up front

Result: Approved in one meeting

SECTION 3:

PERSUASION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- Stakeholder support assessment
- Post-it note plan
- Delivery and style shifting
- Active listening
- Lessons learned



STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT ASSESSMENT

- Identify and prioritize key stakeholders
- Assess current level of support (1-10)
- Estimate maximum achievable support (1-10)
- Strategize to focus efforts for the highest impact

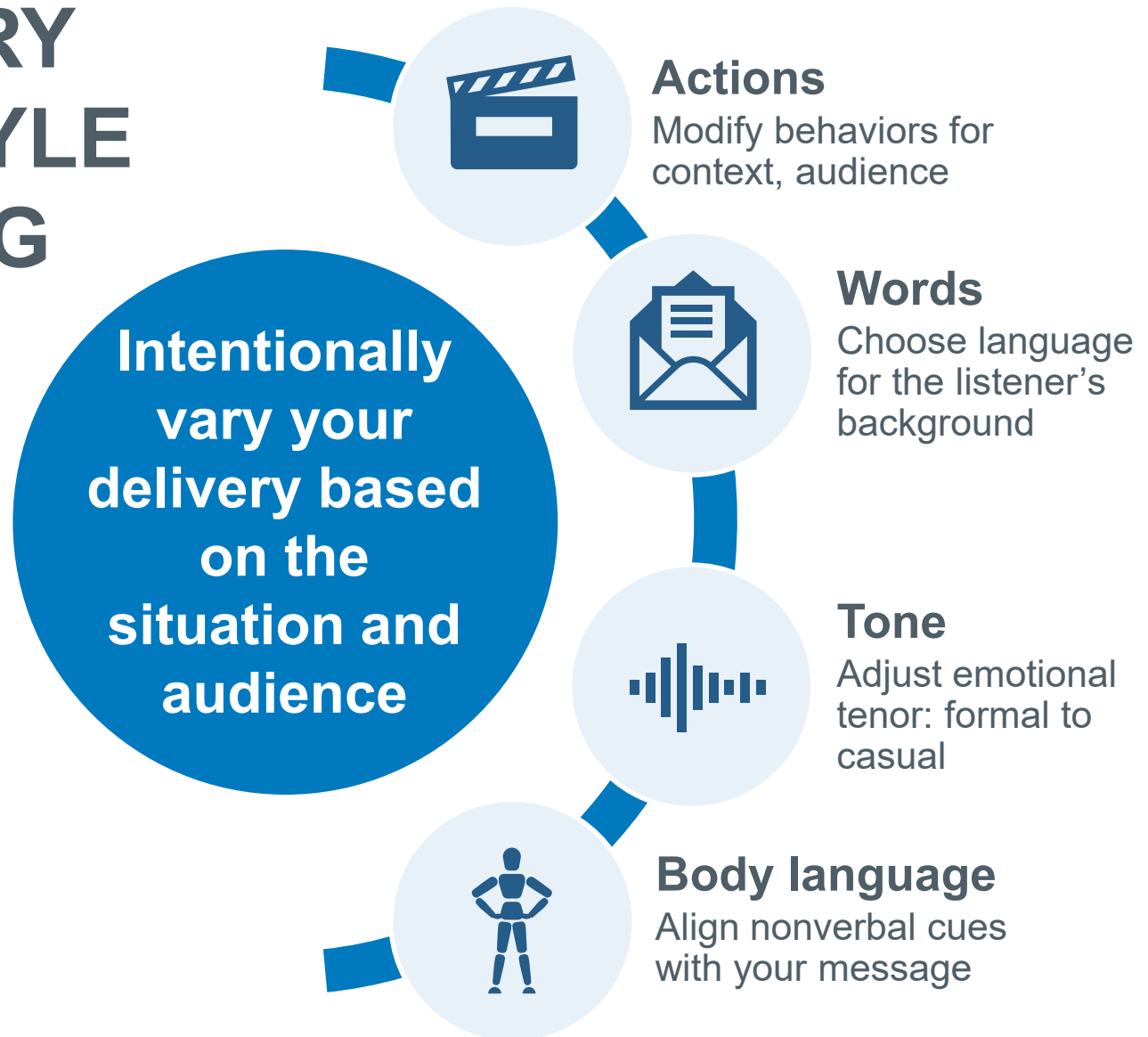


THE POST-IT NOTE PLAN

- **Current situation:** Where we are now
- **Desired outcome:** What we hope to achieve
- **Key points and WIIFM:** Craft messages that resonate
- **Overcome objections:** Address concerns proactively
- **Obtain closure:** Secure commitment and confirm next steps



DELIVERY AND STYLE SHIFTING



ACTIVE LISTENING



People are far more open to being influenced by someone who makes them feel heard first

- Listen to *understand*, not to *respond*
- Be fully present
 - Put aside distractions and give your complete attention
- Don't interrupt
 - Let them finish before responding
- Clarify
 - “Can you tell me more about that?” shows genuine interest and may reveal issues you might otherwise miss
- Restate
 - Paraphrasing what you heard with “So, what I’m hearing is...” confirms understanding and builds trust
- Pay attention to what's *not* said
 - Tone, body language, and hesitation are data points, too
- Acknowledge their perspective
 - Even if you don't agree, validating their point of view keeps the conversation open

LESSONS LEARNED



Discuss these questions with a partner or reflect on them in a journal:

- **Success analysis**

- Recall a time you successfully persuaded someone: What made it work?

- **Failure review**

- Think about an instance where you tried to persuade but fell short: What mistakes did you make?

- **Self-discovery**

- What did these experiences teach you about your strengths, weaknesses, and overall communication style?

- **People patterns**

- What insights have you gained about different personality types and their motivations when communicating?

WHAT NOT TO DO



– **Manipulate**

- Practice ethical persuasion without deceit



– **Assume**

- Base conclusions on facts, not assumptions



– **Keep pushing**

- Respect valid opposing viewpoints and know when to stop



– **Persuade if you're not invested**

- Think twice/reconsider if you lack genuine interest, don't believe your message, or cannot be truthful or candid

PITFALLS TO AVOID



These behaviors can undermine your credibility:

- **Confusing mimicry with alignment**
 - Match and mirror is about respect, not copying behavior
- **Transactional thinking**
 - Balance WIIFM with mutual benefit and furthering long-term relationships
- **Overselling**
 - Pushing too hard signals desperation, not confidence
- **Ignoring context**
 - What works in one setting may backfire in another

BUILD YOUR ACTION PLAN



Take time to reflect on the following questions and outline your personal action plan:

- Do I believe in my ability to convince others that my ideas make sense?
- Which persuasive speaker traits do I already possess?
- Which areas do I need to develop to become more effective?

Action steps:

- Identify at least two specific behaviors to improve
- Create measurable goals and commit to following through

SUMMARY



- **Practice ethical persuasion** and influence through understanding, acceptance, and genuine connection
- **Build rapport:** Match and mirror, and understand the role of “What’s in it for me?”
- **Cultivate influence** with presence, empathy, trustworthiness, and an open mindset
- **Leverage tools** like the stakeholder assessment, Post-It note plan, and active listening
- **Develop an action plan** for continuous improvement and regular practice



RESOURCES

Books

- Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion
 - Robert Cialdini
- Pre-Suasion
 - Robert Cialdini
- Never Split the Difference
 - Chris Voss

Online Articles

- [6 Principles of Persuasion](#)
- [The Art of Influence](#)
- [Influencing Without Authority](#)

Videos

- [The Impact of Persuasion](#)
- [How to Get Your Ideas to Spread](#)

Podcasts

- ◆ [The Science of Social Influence](#)
- ◆ [Think Fast Talk Smart](#)

Apps

- [Headway](#)
- [Blinkist](#)

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