



COLLEGE OF
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Influence with Intention

#UNLCBA  

University of
Nebraska
Lincoln

40%

WE SPEND 40% OF OUR TIME AT WORK DOING THIS ...

Qualtrics performed a study of 9,057 people asking them

“what do you do at work?”

People are spending about 40% of their time devoted to (non-sales) selling

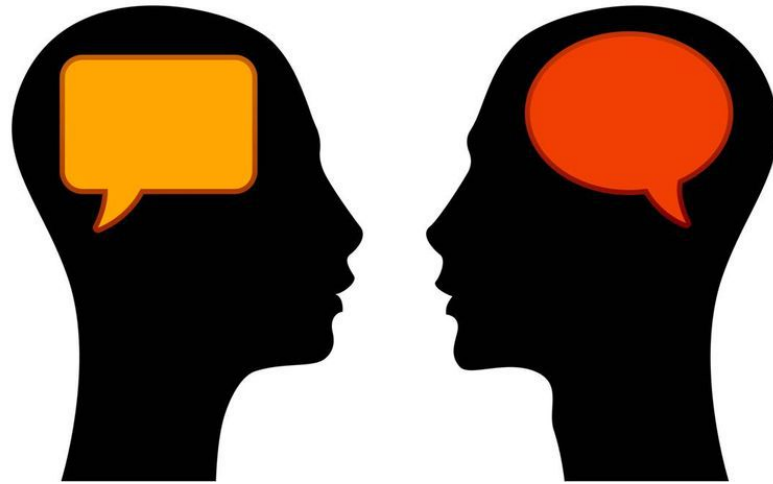
- Persuading
- Influencing
- Convincing
- Teaching
- Coaching
- Instructing
- Pitching
- Training
- Advocating



“Selling”

“moving others”

chat with your neighbor about a recent situation in which you needed to sell an idea or persuade someone





**American
Red Cross**

to be persuasive, I think you need

I. Awareness

II. Audience IQ

III. Messaging Mindfulness

- I. Awareness - Ask yourself, am I in a selling situation?
- II. Audience IQ
- III. Messaging Mindfulness

Strategic, not manipulative

Purposeful, not pushy

- I. Awareness
- II. Audience IQ
- III. Messaging Mindfulness

If people were 100% rational,
we could sell our idea or approach solely on its merit.

BUT just in case you haven't noticed... people are not rational agents.

“People do not buy from a salesperson because they understand their products, but because they felt the salesperson understood their problems”

- Neil Rackam
SPIN Selling, 1988



Audience IQ

- Influence in person
 - 34 times more successful than email
 - May feel less “efficient” but research shows it is demonstrably more effective
- Know your audience and understand what is important to them
 - How important are relationships to them?
 - Analytical (less important) or Amiable (more important)
 - Do they want to be promoted? Is being “visionary” important to them?

Audience IQ

- Don't under estimate the value of rapport
 - Start with agreement and commonalities
- Make *Homophily* work to your advantage
 - People like to associate - and are likely to respect - those who are similar to them
- Emphasizing points of common ground can help you build capital.

Audience IQ

- Ask yourself whether they are a person of high-power or low-power?
- Research shows found that people who feel powerful are more swayed by pitches that focus on competence and skillfulness
 - Those who feel less powerful were more persuaded by pitches that emphasize warmth and sincerity.
- “Am I influencing up or down?”
 - Think about communicating competence or warmth

Start from Understanding



Keep Listening
Be Alert and Be Present

Shaping Your Message

Message Mindfulness



- Focus on them, not on you – solve a problem that is theirs
- You walk into a car dealership to see a car that you have researched
 - A salesperson walks up, “Let me tell you all about the features of this car.”
 - **A salesperson walks up, “Tell me what interests you about this car?”**
- You can always open with “How do you think _____ is going?”

Message Mindfulness

- Add a small negative critique to your idea or approach
 - Helps to communicate credibility and authenticity
- Leverages the *Blemishing Effect*
 - Research shows when a little negative information is presented after significant positive information
 - the thing will be considered more attractive than if only the positive information is provided
- Online reviews



Message Mindfulness

- Focus on what's missing or what is not being provided
- As humans, we have strong *Loss Aversion*
 - Meaning we would prefer to avoid losses than have the equivalent gains
- Competitive loss

Message Mindfulness

- Create points of comparison
 - Always present more than one viable option
- *The Contrast Principle*
 - We often understand something better when we see it in comparison, then when we see it in isolation
 - The Economist
- But not too many choices (Jam Stand, 24 vs. 6)



Message Mindfulness

- Get them to say “no”
 - People are reluctant to say "yes" because it makes them commit to something.
- People will do things not in their best interest, just to prove autonomy
 - If you make it clear to them it’s okay to say no, they feel autonomous and more collaborative
- Try “Would it be a bad idea if...?” people won’t feel locked in

Message Mindfulness



- Enable them to experience the benefits before a decision needs to be made
- *The Endowment Effect*
 - People value things more once they are in possession of them
- From Sirius XM Radio to an Intern Program

Message Mindfulness

10

- Win over a critical mass
 - Builds momentum and resisters will feel left behind
 - Takes patience
- Provides *Social Proof* to potential challengers
 - We often view behavior as appropriate when others are doing it
- Laugh tracks and the American Red Cross

Message Mindfulness



- Improv as inspiration
 - Don't go in with PowerPoint, scripted agenda, and preconceived notions about what should happen during your meeting
- Persuasive conversation
 - Your selling points should be paragraph-sized

Sales Pitch

You deliver it

It's all about you

You script it ahead of time

It's one-way

You talk about what you are trying to sell

It gets more boring

You may get lucky and have it be relevant to your audience

Persuasive Conversation

You and your customer engage in it

It's about your customer

You and your customer create it together

It's two-way

Your customer leads you to what you say

It gets more interesting

It's highly likely to be relevant to your customer

Steve Yastrow, Ditch the Pitch: The Art of Improvised Persuasion

Message Mindfulness



- Persuasive conversation
- During that conversation, try an classic Improv Rule:
Instead of **“Yes, but...”** say **“Yes, AND...”**
- Creates alignment and forward momentum

Imagine you're a housing contractor, trying to persuade a customer to install synthetic siding on their house. The client says, "I think natural wood siding looks much better. I want wood."

"Yes, wood looks great but vinyl siding is much less expensive."

"Yes, wood looks great and we have many new options that look just as good as wood at a much lower cost."

Final Thoughts

I. Be aware when you need to sell and be purposeful

II. Audience IQ

- Listening is a super-power
- The best way to influence well is to listen and be diagnostic

III. Messaging Mindfulness

- Focus on having a persuasive conversation, and not a one-sided sales pitch
- Leverage loss aversion, create comparisons, use blemishing, enable your audience to experience the benefits, and build social proof

Final Thoughts

I. Be Aware

II. Know your Audience

III. Shape your Message

40%

“In today’s knowledge economy, which has witnessed the steady breakdown of traditional hierarchies and functional silos, power has less to do with control and more to do with influence.”

- William Ocasio
professor of management and organizations at the Kellogg School

keep in touch and let me know about
your influencing adventures

@salesclassroom 

