Craig Grossman/Fabulous Copy by Craig Grossman

509-993-8059

Email:craig@fabulouscopy.com

Influence: The 7 Most Powerful Ways to Persuade Your Audience



Use These Famous Sales Tactics To "Hit The Ball Out Of The Park" With Your B2B Sales Copy!

Corporate buyers like to think that they make up their own minds. That they make their own choices about what products and services they buy for their company. But the truth is, they are often influenced in their buying decisions, in ways large and small. Most of the time, they are unaware that they have been persuaded at all!

Robert Cialdini is a behavioral scientist and an expert on the subject of influence. He has conducted extensive research about buyer behavior and wrote a book that's still a bestseller to this day called *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion.*

Cialdini was tired of being a "patsy" and an easy mark for the pitches of salesmen, fundraisers, and other peddlers. So he decided to learn all the tricks of these salespeople and other influencers. The initial response he received from his peers about ways others persuade people was so good that he wrote a best-selling book about this.

You might think there are dozens of ways that we are persuaded to buy things. But Cialdini discovered that they could all be boiled down to seven principle techniques of persuasion. All the rest are just variations on these seven themes.

You can use these methods in your B2B sales letters, landing pages, emails, sell sheets, videos, case studies, testimonials, and other marketing materials to make a stronger case for your client's customers to hit the "buy" button.

So without further ado, here's a brief explanation of each psychological inducement principle and how to use them to create better sales results:

**1. Reciprocation, or the power of reciprocity**. When someone gives a gift, you feel obligated to give something back to that person or organization.

* Example: A pharmaceutical rep buys lunch for everyone in a doctor's office. So the doctor feels more obligated to prescribe the drugs the sales rep informs him about.
* How To Use This: Have your clients give away a free valuable report on their landing pages or extra free goodies with their main product or service. Some companies even give their products away for free to first-time buyers. Because of our natural desire to reciprocate, your client's customer will feel obligated to make a purchase after receiving their freebies.

**2. Liking and the "Halo Effect."** Potential customers are more likely to buy from your client if they *like* their salesperson, your client's company, or their products.

* Example: Say your client is a SaaS company. Their salesperson notices a college diploma on the wall behind his potential customer's desk during a Zoom presentation. He exclaims, "Is that your diploma from ASU? It looks like we both graduated from the same college! I loved Arizona State!" This statement makes her feel like they have something in common. So she'll like the salesperson more, which increases the likelihood of her buying software from your client.
* Example of the Halo Effect: Research in Canada has shown that attractive candidates in an election received more than two-and-a-half times as many votes as unattractive ones.
* How To Use This:
* Emphasize what your client's products (or product benefits) have in common with their potential customers in your sales copy.
* Show empathy for their difficulties or situations.
* Compliments can go a long way, such as congratulating a potential buyer for being able to appreciate the complex features in your client's product.
* Use the Halo Effect effectively: enhance your attractiveness in your next client's Zoom interview by wearing your "Sunday best" (nice shirt or dress) and combing your hair! You'll get more respect if you dress nice.

**3. Social Proof.** The concept is that our client's customers are more likely to say "yes" to a proposal, recommendation, or purchase if they see other customers like them also saying "yes".

* Example: True story – front-page stories in newspapers of suicides produce a subsequent *increase* in suicides in that area. They also create an increase in "accidental deaths" due to car and plane crashes. How can that be? Because a lot of the people who cause those accidents are committing secret suicides! The suiciders see other distressed people like them ending it all, making it okay to follow suit.
* Another example: Dotty in accounting at Bali Corp. is on the fence about buying a new software program called Spreadsoft for Business. During a lunch meeting with the local accountants association, her buddy Pete told her his company had just switched to Spreadsoft from Freshbooks, and they like the new program much better. This experience makes it okay for Dotty to pull the trigger and purchase the new program.
* How To Use this:
* In sales copy, cite the number of other companies that have bought your client's product ("used and enjoyed by over 2000 accounting professionals across the country!").
* Use testimonials liberally in your sales materials (including the customer's picture, company name, and personal name if possible).
* Examine your client's online product reviews, and make sure your client follows up right away with the customer when a less-than-positive review shows up. Of course, having *negative* social proof will create the opposite effect of what you want for your clients!

**4. Authority.** The benefits of a product or service are more believable if presented by an authority figure.

* Example: The spokesperson on the TV commercial for the latest prescription drug made by your client to help diabetics is wearing a white lab coat with a stethoscope around her neck. Consumers trust doctors, especially in uniform. So they believe what she says about the new drug and later ask their doctor about it.
* How To Use This:
* Find an actual authority on your B2B client's subject (scientist, researcher, or another expert) to quote from. Or have him speak directly to your client's audience in your sales video.
* Using statistics to back up your product claims goes a long way in building up your client's brand authority. Here's an example: "87% of our client's end users noticed significantly less pain after using our product".
* From an SEO standpoint, having lots of well-written, in-depth content articles or blogs on your client's website will increase the trust and authority in their company and boost their website's search rankings.

**5. Scarcity.** People have a stronger desire for items they can't quickly get because of the product or service's natural or perceived scarcity. This is related to FOMO, or Fear Of Missing Out.

* Example: Your client makes pallet jacks for warehouses. But due to supply chain issues and chip shortages (yes, pallet jacks now use computer chips too!), they can't produce more stock and only have 200 left for sale. Word gets around to warehouse managers, and all 200 units sell in 2 weeks…for a 10% premium price!
* How To Use This:
* In sales copy incorporate messages such as "There are only 150 spots available for this webinar, so be sure to reserve yours today!"
* Or emphasize the number of items available: "Only 1000 of these signature baseball bats were made, and they aren't making any more!"
* If your client had a popular item that was discontinued, consider a marketing promotion to bring it back with a "limited time offer."

**6. Commitment and Consistency.** This is about our desire to be (and to appear) consistent with what we have already done. Once we make a choice or take a stand, we will want to behave consistently with that commitment.

* Example: The Purchasing Manager for a furnace manufacturer consistently buys thermostats needed for their products from Acme Products, even though other thermostat producers now make more sophisticated thermostats than Acme. But she still buys from Acme because "that's what I've always done".
* Another Example: Company X has a new Sales Manager. He just tweeted to his sales team and other executives that he is committed to increasing product sales by 25% over the next year. Since he made a public statement about his goal, the sales team has worked extra hard to achieve this lofty goal.
* How To Use This:
* In your client's B2B sales copy, present their product's *most important* benefit, along with *compelling* proof - first. This will create at least a modest commitment from their reader ("Wow, this product does sound fantastic! I want to find out more."), so she will read the rest of your client's sales letter.
* Find a professional UX copywriter for your client's website (yes, that would be me!) to help the company create an enjoyable **user experience** for its business audience. Good UX copywriting can help websites be consistently easy to navigate, have clear and focused writing, and have content that thoroughly answers the reader's questions. The better the user experience the potential customer has, the longer they stay on your client's website. This inspires the reader to be more interested/committed to your client's products. And they will be more likely to take the next steps with your client's company in their buying journey.

**7. Unity.** The groups we belong to or identify with can influence us. For B2B clients, these could include their trade association, local chamber of commerce, or even the executives' business golf buddies! If your client's "we" group makes a recommendation, they are more likely to act on that advice since it's coming from "our" group.

* Example: You're on a small fishing boat with your brother (who you don't feel very close to) and your best friend. They both fall in during a storm, and there is only one life preserver. There's no question who gets it – your brother! Because he is family and "one of us."
* Another Example: The COO and Sales Manager from Company Z go out for drinks with the executives from Company Y, one of their parts suppliers. The Company Y guys tell the others that sales have increased by 30% since they hired a savvy sales enablement copywriter! Company Z's sales manager is impressed and immediately begins looking for the best SE copywriter he can find.
* How To Use This:
* For your client's case studies or testimonials, select your client's most satisfied customers that potentially have the *same groups in common* with your client's target audience. As a result, they will be more believable to that audience.
* If you use paid influencers to promote your B2B client's brand, be sure they have a lot in common with your company's target audiences.
* Acquire endorsements or sponsorships from organizations that your potential client's customers belong to or identify with positively. Examples are the local tech startup group, their industry trade association, or their local Rotary Club.

As you can imagine, these tools of persuasion can be used in ethical ways – or not! You can probably see how unscrupulous salespeople or perhaps shady politicians could use these seven categories of influence to convince you to buy products (or ideas) that *maybe* *you don't need* after all.

Hopefully, now that you know how the rules of influence work, you won't become a pushover for their high-pressure sales tactics again!

Of course, you can use these seven methods of persuasion *ethically* for your client's marketing campaigns. Used effectively, you'll create more substantial copy and content that is sure to bring in more business for the B2B organizations you help.