

Influence Strategies for Practitioners



Linda Rising

linda@lindarising.org

www.lindarising.org

[@RisingLinda](#)



Persuasion

- Psychological dynamics to change people in ways they wouldn't if left alone.
- Manipulation, brainwashing, have a very different intent.
- Persuasion strategies are *tools* that can be used for any purpose.
- There are always ethical considerations.



Who needs it?

- **You're smart**
- **To convince others, all you have to do is lay out the facts**
- **If others are smart, they'll get it!**
- **This underhanded “marketing” is, well, underhanded, and only for people who have to sell stuff!**



Influence doesn't work on me!

- **I'm smart**
- **Therefore, I'm a rational decision maker**
- **I am not swayed by hype**



What's in your toolbox now?

- **Your only influence tool now is likely logical argument**
- **It is not only not convincing but can cause others to become more resistant – the Backfire Effect**
- **Don't get rid of this tool – others will need it to rationalize their decision**



Forewarned is forearmed

- **Be aware because others will use these strategies on you.**
- **The techniques are fundamental to how humans interact, we've all used them without being aware of it.**
- **Watch out for neuromarketing!**



Research shows us as we are!

- **Control group in all experiments**
- **Two groups reading the same paper – Confirmation Bias**
- **Free cable TV**



Citations/recommendations

- This is not an academic talk. Please request references if interested.
- <http://www.influenceatwork.com/articles>
- Two good “starter” recommendations
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdCzN7RYbw&list=UU8IMseLCZx2BZe3thxHXnog&index=1&feature=plcp>

*"If everything were on the line in a negotiation,
I can't think of anyone I'd rather have advising me than
Bob Cialdini."*

—TOM PETERS, *The Tom Peters Group*

FIFTH EDITION

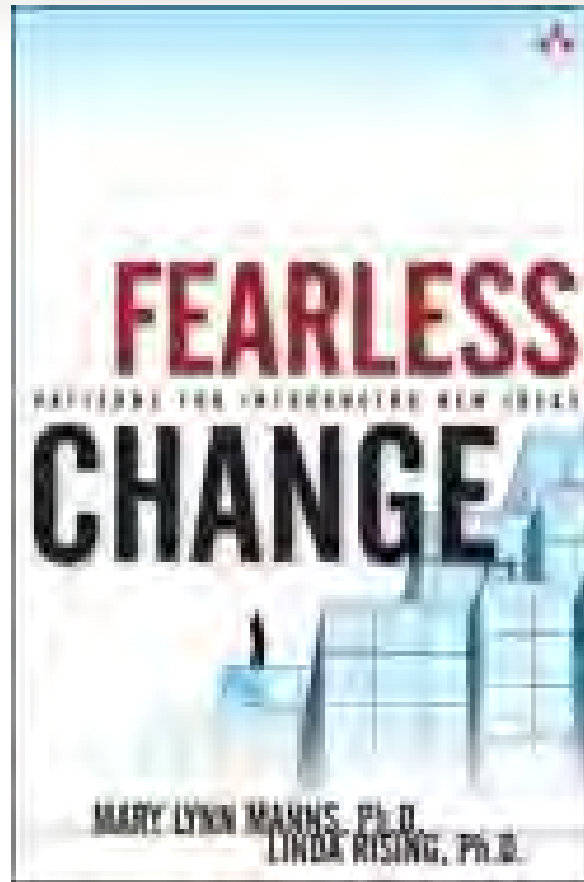
INFLUENCE

SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

OVER
ONE
MILLION
COPIES
SOLD!

ROBERT B. CIALDINI

Influence: Science and Practice, Robert B. Cialdini



Fearless Change: Patterns for Introducing New Ideas, Mary Lynn Manns and Linda Rising



Cialdini's Six Strategies

Liking: We like attractive people and those who are like us

Reciprocity: We repay in kind

Social proof/Consensus: We follow similar or superior others

Commitment/Consistency: We align with previous commitments

Authority: We defer to authority or expertise

Scarcity/Exclusivity: We want more when access is restricted—enhanced by exclusivity



1-Liking: We like attractive people and those who are like us

- **Attractive often = height, deeper voice**
- **Pulpit vs king's box in castles; chair at head is larger and taller in Old State House in Boston**
- **College lecturers**
- **Judicial system. Who are the bad guys?**
- **Familiar names, easier typeface, easier to pronounce, closer objects (carrots in front of kids), words typed with the right hand!**
- **Patagonian toothfish became Chilean sea bass in 1977. Created by fish wholesaler Lee Lantz.**
- **Why would we be hardwired for this?**



Height = advantage

- An inch of height = \$789/year in salary, attractive people more likely to be hired and promoted
- Recent poll of half the companies on Fortune 500, CEOs overwhelmingly white and tall (on avg, just under 6' (avg American male is 5'9"))
- Among CEOs 58%, among American males 14.5% 6' or taller
- Halo Effect – any advantage is expanded to cover all areas
- American Express CEO Kenneth Chenault is short (5'9") and black



What can you do?

- **Look for: real commonality, areas for genuine compliments, opportunities for cooperation**
- **Negotiation deadlock reduced from 30% to 6% by exchanging personal info beforehand**
- **Face-to-face requests 34 times more effective than e-mail**
- ***Do Food***
- **Say, “We’re working with you” or “We’re just like you”**
- **Beware of others who claim to be like you or appear to share interests**



What can you do?

In pairs or triads think of some things you can do on Monday morning to use “Liking”



2-Reciprocity: We repay in kind

- **Hare Krishna**
- **Charities, supermarkets, jam study
(don't put more than 3 ties in front of the
customer -- Harvey McKay)**
- **Make the first offer in any negotiation**
- **The story of Reverend Steele**
- **Why would we be hardwired for this?**

Surprise is worth as much as force – Paul Graham





Benefits of surprise

- **Giving first may not be enough. It must be unexpected**
- **Surprise changes behavior**
- **Surprise is cheap; dime near copy machine**
- **Surprise turbocharges emotions; surprise + happiness = maximum feel good**



Free stuff!

- In one study: 40% bought cupcake + 2 cookies for 75 cents BUT 73% bought cupcake for 75 cents when 2 cookies added for “free”
- Economist: on-line \$59; print \$125; on-line + print \$125. 100 MIT students. 16 chose on-line, 84 chose on-line + print. (2) Experiment repeated with different subjects and no print-only option, 68 chose on-line, 32 chose on-line + print. “Decoy” print-only sent 84 to on-line + print in (1)
- Why are Gmail and Facebook free? What are you giving in return?
- We are “loss averse” and there is no loss when it’s free!



What can you do?

- Be the first to give: service, information, concession, something nice – the more unexpected the better – small, but thoughtful
- The Biscuit Tin should never be empty ☺!
- *Sincere Appreciation* - be specific
- Say, “What can I do for you?”
- Say, “I’m sure you would have done the same for me.”
NOT “It was nothing!”
- Say, “As we promised earlier...” or “We are giving you...”
- Beware of others bearing gifts



What can you do?

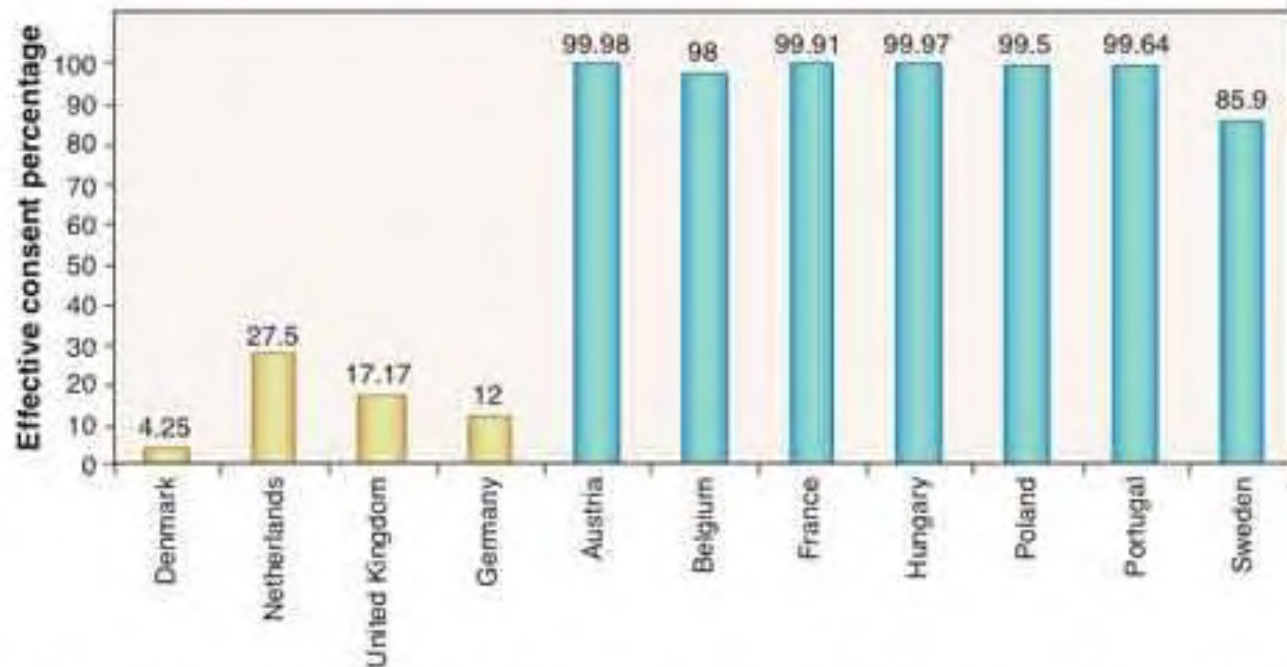
In pairs or triads think of some things you can do on Monday morning to use “Reciprocity”



3-Social proof: We follow similar or superior others

- Canned laughter, fancy dinner party, shills
- [Conformity.mp4](#)
- Towel study: (1) environment, (2) socially responsible, (3) saved money, (4) 29% (same hotel) - 41% (same room)
- 11 people booked this hotel in the last 48 hours; 2 others are viewing this hotel right now
- Why would we be hardwired for this?

The Default Rule



Effective consent rates, by country. Explicit consent (opt-in, gold) and presumed consent (opt-out, blue).



What can you do?

- Say, "If you don't get back to me by < > then I'll go ahead with <default action>."
- No more than 3 alternatives. Present your preference last, say, "The easiest and best would be to <default action>."
- Study <http://darkpatterns.org/> -- examples of default influence strategies



What else can you do?

- Show testimonials from many others
- Choose the default (a form of anchoring)
- *External Validation* (conference, book, article), *Big Jolt* (famous person)
- Say, “Many believe that...” or “We all want”
- Beware of looking to others for direction – when you are uncertain



What can you do?

In pairs or triads think of some things you can do on Monday morning to use “Social Proof”



4-Commitment/Consistency: We align with previous commitments

- **After placing bet, after voting, after making any decision (especially public), we are more certain it was the right thing to do**
- **Cognitive Dissonance!**
- **Homeowners asked to sign a petition and then asked to put up a huge sign (17% became 76%)**
- **Musical event ad never lists prices**
- **Why would we be hardwired for this?**



What can you do?

- Build your case with yes's
- Ask for it in writing (stop smoking – *The Easy Way*)
- Ask “intention questions,” -- Will you <vote on Tuesday>?
- Be careful about agreeing to or signing anything—signing at the top more influential than signing at the bottom



What can you do?

In pairs or triads think of some things you can do on Monday morning to use “Commitment/Consistency”



5-Authority: We defer to authority or expertise

- **Stanley Milgram's grisly experiments (also involves Commitment/Consistency)**
- **Nurse's drug story – doctor or computer?**
- **Putting diplomas on the wall increased compliance for stroke rehab 33%**
- **Affects our behavior – subjects wearing lab coats performed better**
- **Those who speak first or loudest gain more respect**
- **Why would we be hardwired for this?**



What can you do?

- **Establish your credentials: professionalism, industry knowledge, admit a small weaknesses first**
- ***Big Jolt* (famous person)**
- **Say, “My experience is that...” or “Tests confirm that...”**
- **Beware of testimony from famous people or other “experts”**



What can you do?

In pairs or triads think of some things you can do on Monday morning to use “Authority”



6-Scarcity/Exclusivity: We want more when access is restricted—enhanced by exclusivity, cost

- **18th century French reformer, economist, and statesman Turgot**
- **Banned material**
- **Jury told to disregard information**
- **Wine and beer lovers easily fooled**
- **Higher priced meds work better**
- **Why would we be hardwired for this?**

A Birkin Bag

A Birkin is a rare and precious thing. It is for sale only in our shops, since, to select the right one for you, you have to see it, smell it, touch it, or order it from an informed salesperson.





What can you do?

- **Emphasize: genuine scarcity, unique features, exclusive information**
- **Reduce time to make a decision**
- **Say, “Don’t miss out...” or “Here’s the best kept secret about...”**
- **Beware of pressure tactics. Give yourself space to think. Even 10 min has been shown to lead to better decisions.**



What can you do?

In pairs or triads think of some things you can do on Monday morning to use “Scarcity/Exclusivity”

COSTCO





Inspiration

Behavioral Insights Team

**[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/
behavioural-insights-team](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/behavioural-insights-team)**



The real problem? Information overload!

- **John Stuart Mill (d. 1873) the last person to know everything**
- **Most information less than 15 years old**
- **Some scientific information doubles every 3 years**
- **No one can know enough to make all decisions intelligently**



Short cuts work!

- **Influence strategies are short-cuts**
- **Most of the time these are good things, that's why we have evolved to use them.**
- **We don't have time to deliberate every decision**
- **Don't beat yourself up or drive yourself crazy! Just be reasonably cautious 😊!**



Protection suggestions

- Continually search for potentially relevant or contradictory evidence
- Have a *Champion Skeptic* on the team
- Seek diverse outside opinions to counter overconfidence
- If it's not important, buy the ice cream
😊!



The last word

- **It's to our benefit to understand and use these strategies to influence others and protect ourselves.**
- **Remember there is an ethical component.**
- **Experts have said that awareness is the first step toward protecting yourself, but there are no guarantees.**
- **Good luck! Thanks for your attention!**