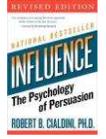


INFLUENCE: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSUASION

by Robert Cialdini, Ph.D.



Overview

This book discusses six main tactics used for effective persuasion: (1) Reciprocation, (2) Social Proof, (3) Commitment & Consistency, (4) Liking, (5) Authority, and (6) Scarcity. These tactics are effective because the psychological principles constructing each rule are deeply ingrained in the human psyche causing us to act in illogical ways. By understanding these principles, the reader can know how to be a more effective persuader and realize when they're being taken advantage of.

Introduction

Compliance professionals (for example salespersons) know how to make us comply in order to meet their quota; their livelihood depends on it! Therefore, they are more privy to knowing which influence tactics are effective and which aren't. There are thousands of tactics, but the majority fall within 6 basic categories which the author outlines:

"The principles — consistency, reciprocation, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity — are each discussed in terms of their function in the society and in terms of how their enormous force can be commissioned by a compliance professional who deftly incorporates them into requests for purchases, donations, concessions, votes, assent, etc."

The power in each of these principles is that each has an ability to produce an automatic and mindless response. This automatic compliance will become more common as sales becomes a more integral part of the economy; therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics of these tactics.

Chapter 1. Weapons of Influence

Mother turkeys respond lovingly to anything that chirps, whether animate or inanimate. It is one of the mother's "fixed-action patterns". This pattern is so pervasive that the mother will even reject her own offspring if it doesn't chirp.

Humans are not so different, and respond to fixed-action patterns as well. Such patterns involve sequences of behavior, each of which are activated in very specific ways. Influencers and keen observers of human behavior who know about these patterns can use them to their advantage. We can be duped into following these patterns at the wrong times, simply due to someone activating a specific subroutine in our brain.

Examples of fixed-action patterns include:

- People will be more likely to do us a favor if we provide a reason, however illogical the reason.
- People tend to subconsciously believe that expensive items are high quality.

While in a given situation the reasons might seem ridiculous, such heuristics may be true over a large enough sample size. As such, over the long run these pre-programmed responses may actually be the most rational approach.

*"You and I exist
in an extraordinarily complicated
stimulus environment, easily the most
rapidly moving and complex
that has ever existed on this planet.*

To deal with it, we need shortcuts."

However reliable these fixed patterns of response may seem, they are merely mechanical processes. Thus they can be exploited by a person who knows how to trigger them in a target.



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