

The Psychology of Influencing People

Understanding yourself and your prospect will help you make better connections.

Many salespeople over-influence the prospect on a sales call. Often, they will comment on pictures on the prospect's wall or desk, or talk about news, weather and sports incessantly in an attempt to find common ground.

While it is important to bond with a prospect, the bonding described above is not a way to differentiate yourself from other salespeople. Setting yourself apart takes a fresh approach.

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Conveying a Message

When we are in front of a prospect, there are three parts to the communication. There is our body language, tonality and the words themselves. According to research done through neurolinguistic programming, our body language represents 55 percent of what our prospect "hears." The tonality—how loud/soft or fast/slow we talk—represents 38 percent. Lastly, the words themselves only represent 7 percent of what we "hear."

Assuming you have good body language and understand the importance of matching and mirroring your prospect, you are really missing out by not meeting your prospects in person. Many salespeople overly rely on the phone, e-mail or even text messaging. This may be easier, but it's typically not the best way to engage a prospect.

Personality Types

Taking this a step further, you may be aware of the four distinct personality types. Some people break them into the "dominant," "extrovert," "peacemaker" and "cautious" types. The easiest way to discern these personality types is by discovering your prospect's pace and what they are oriented toward.

Pace has to do with slower versus faster. Orientation has to do with being more people-oriented versus task-oriented. A faster-paced, task-oriented person tends to be a dominant personality. A faster-paced, people-oriented person tends to be an extrovert.

A slower-paced, people-oriented person tends to be a peacemaker. Lastly, a slower-paced, task-oriented person tends to be a cautious personality.

Types of careers which tend to make up these personalities are: Owners of companies and high-ranking military tend to be dominants. Salespeople, comedians and actors tend to be extroverts. Counselors and therapists are likely peacemakers. CPAs and neurosurgeons tend to be cautious types.

Knowing which personality type you are, along with knowing the personality type of the prospect, allows you to connect more quickly. Being more dynamic in your delivery with different personality types over time will pay big dividends.

Learning Styles

How does your prospect learn? While all of us learn using all three styles—visual, auditory and feeling—we tend to have a dominant way of learning.

Visual learners talk fast because they communicate in pictures. When they think about answers to questions, they look up. They also are more likely to want to see how your

product or service works through video, pictures or brochures. They will say things such as, "I can't see what you are talking about" or "Show me how that works."

Auditory learners talk louder and slower to make sure they are articulating what they want to com-

municate. When they think about answers to questions, they look to the side. They need you to tell them about your product and make good eye contact with them. They will say things such as, "I hear you" or "That doesn't sound right to me."

Feeling people talk slowly and softly. They edit most everything they say because they are in tune with how what they say impacts those around them. When they think about answers to questions, they look down. They say things such as, "I just don't feel like this will work."

When a prospect feels you are like them or that you "get them," they are more likely to be truthful with you. They can relax and together you can come up with a solution that benefits both of you. By understanding messaging, personality types and learning styles, you can make a better connection with your prospects and be a better influencer. ■



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