

# persuasion

**the ability to cause someone do or believe something by giving them a good reason to do it**



Persuasion is convincing others to change their point of view, agree to a commitment, purchase a product or service, or take a course of action. Oral and written persuasive skills are very valued in the workplace. Sales is the most obvious form of persuasion, but this skill is used in many other positions as well. Managers persuade employees to do unpleasant but necessary tasks, billing representatives persuade their clients to pay their bills, PCCs persuade HHAs to take patients.

Regardless of our position in the company, we can all benefit from fine tuning the art of persuasion:

**Let them know you care.** When you make understanding the needs of your audience your first priority, you'll see there's no reason to kick off the agenda with an elevator pitch.

**Use their name in conversation.** As referenced in Dale Carnegie's famous work, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, calling someone by their name -- and using it often -- is one subtle, yet effective way to appear more persuasive.

**Let it be "their idea".** Kim Kaupe, co-founder of custom publication company ZinePak, rethinks her approach to persuasion to frame the situation in the eyes of the person she wants to get on her side. "Too often, people approach being persuasive as moving people from point A to point B, instead of saying, 'Let me join you at point A and see where we go,'" she says. "Talking through a situation with the person you are trying to persuade allows them to take the journey with you. In fact, sometimes halfway through the journey, it becomes their idea to go to Point B: the exact place you've been trying to go!"

**Be specific and confident.** If you speak confidently, clearly and concisely, people are more likely to listen to you, to take what you have to say seriously, and to agree with you. Prepare what you want to say; make sure you have everything clear in your own mind before tackling a tricky conversation. When speaking, avoid filler words – such as ‘umm’, ‘err’ or ‘like’ – because these suggest that you may be uncertain about your message's validity.

**Make the conversation about goals -- not yourself.** Focus on the *desired outcome* is key when being persuasive. This helps gain a greater investment in what everyone is working to achieve as opposed to creating roadblocks because of personal agendas. A goal-focused approach has everyone winning and opens people up.

## **Your body language also has a significant impact on your ability to persuade:**

- \*Smiling naturally – makes you seem approachable and likeable, *even over the phone*
- \*Raising your eyebrows – signals you are not a threat, and are friendly and approachable
- \*Avoid crossing your arms and putting your hands in your pockets – signals that you don't feel comfortable and makes you appear less approachable
- \*Eye contact – shows interest in the conversation and trustworthiness