

Logic is Good... For Losing.

Several large surveys show that most people believe a logical discussion, with good data and the right logical supporting facts, is the best way to influence or persuade. Often, they break the process down to three main steps:

- . Present your proposition clearly, with conviction.**
- . Present your supporting data, with the right facts, logic and information.**
- . Structure your “deals” and move on to closure.**

But according to Dr. Jay Conger, Director of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California Business School, “Following this process is one surefire way to fail at persuasion.”

Why?

Neuroscientists have recently discovered that the brain waves we emit when we engage in logical thinking (for example, when we solve a math problem) are virtually identical to those we emit when we are forced to plunge our hands and arms into ice water. It's painful! Further, these researchers have determined that our brains require 300 percent more effort—measured in calories burned—for heavy thinking, compared with “mental cruising.”

Knowledgeable persuaders don't force persuasion partners into icy water! Skilled people don't demand 300% more energy for decisions. They help their partners make good decisions by learning what they want, doing the heavy thinking, then determining how to position the discussion.

Skilled persuaders evaluate which of the seven triggers that will apply to another person. Then they carefully frame and deliver a presentation based on those triggers. They use facts and figures, only when needed, to support a triggers-based decision.

An example: We have a client who boasted that his company was successful because he was able to make and implement decisions quickly. An astute sales rep wrapped up her presentation to this CEO by saying, "Charlie, you mentioned that you like to make quick decisions—will that be the case here?" Essentially, the rep set up a prime situation for the consistency trigger to operate. The CEO had to be consistent with his prior statement, and the consistency trigger resulted in a handshake, and a \$50,000 profit!

The formula is fundamental: Employ the seven triggers, the client's navigation system for making correct decisions. Use facts, figures, and logic only when needed to reinforce a triggers-based decision. It may be the opposite of what you're used to—but it's a surefire way to win at persuasion.

No wonder people hate a logical, reasoned approach!

Luckily for us, our brains are hard-wired with mechanisms that help us make good decisions without painstaking analysis and reasoning. These mechanisms are known as triggers,  you can also think of them as "instincts" or gut reactions. Essentially, they are the decision-making shortcuts we easily and naturally employ all day long. They are our automatic self-guidance systems. We often don't even realize we're using them!

Put simply triggers are our navigational aids. They help us make easy, non-analytical, yet correct decisions. There are seven major triggers we all depend on to help us easily make quick, automatic and right decisions. One example is the consistency trigger. Here's how it works. We all have a kind of database in our brains that records past thoughts and actions. This database provides a roadmap for future decisions. When faced with a decision, our brain does an instantaneous search, and we are oriented to act in a way that is consistent with our past actions.

In short, we do what we've done before. A citizen who's voted for the conservative slate in the past will usually do so again, without bothering to seriously analyze the rhetoric of all the candidates running. Spenders make decisions to keep spending, savers tend to decide again and again to save. Cautious people take careful actions, risk tolerant people do not.

That's not to say that logic has no place in decision-making. But logic tends to come later, after the decision-maker has responded to his or her internal triggers. For example, when people are in the market for a house, they're often attracted to one that "feels right." (Maybe it reminds them of a place where they used to live?) Later, when they're discussing the house with others, they'll talk about more logical aspects —the great neighborhood, easy access to the highway, a good school system, etc.

Now, what does this mean for you, the persuader?