

10 Ways To Get Your Point Across Persuasively



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Most people have their mind made up about everything—politics, social issues, business decisions. Just ask them. Very few people will invite you to persuade them to do anything. So if you're going to get someone to change their behavior, their actions, or their mind, you'll need to do it intentionally. Consider these ten tips:

1. **Listen:** Great negotiators distinguish themselves with their ability to listen well. Having both people walk away satisfied with a deal often depends on how well one listens for agreement and mutual opportunities. Ditto for changing someone's mind. Where's the sweet spot—the need, the dissatisfaction, the unmet goal, the dream? Listen for how your message aligns with what the other person already wants or needs.
2. **Match their reality:** Many executive speeches miss the mark because they aim for the general workforce and hit no one. The average employee can't even relate to the executive's experience or examples. Narrow your focus. Match your listener's day-to-day experience. Make your point real and relevant for the few, not the many.
3. **Reduce the emotional noise:** Ever been to a sports event where the noise from the game and fans around you drowns out your conversation? That's often the kind of emotional noise you're competing with as you try to get someone's attention for your point. Don't make the mistake of increasing the chatter and drowning out your own message. Wait for a more appropriate time.
4. **Make the point painful or visionary:** Open their eyes to the current situation. Make the person or group feel the pain of the status quo. What's doing nothing going to cost them? Loss of respect? Diminished brand? Lost productivity? Low morale? Hard dollars? If not pain of the present, can you paint a picture of the future if they made a change? Help them to catch a glimpse of a new dream.
5. **Get specific:** People think in pictures. Talk about a warehouse, not a "facility." Ask for an additional "3 new employees to complete the project," not "additional resources." Recommend that you "delay signing the supplier agreement for 60 days," not that they "reconsider the supplier agreement in light of certain new developments."
6. **Speak to the heart; make it personal:** Politicians understand the power of an emotional appeal to move a nation. Consider past campaign slogans and speeches. Listen also to sound bites and stump speeches that tug at the emotional strings—either positively to position their point of view or negatively to put down opposing perspectives. Yes, of course, people want data and explanations. Just don't expect logic alone to build your case. Storytelling is a basic skill for persuasive leaders.
7. **Give relevant reasons in the right order:** What seems obvious to you is seldom obvious to the other person. Trust me on this. Having taught presentation skills workshops and writing skills workshops for more than three decades, I can't tell you how often I've discussed a persuasive presentation or sales proposal with someone, pointing out that the next action was unclear. Their frequent answer? "Oh, they'll know. That's obvious." (And when questioned, the intended "target" didn't know.) If you're speaking to someone you expect will agree with you or someone you think will be neutral, present your strongest reasons first.

If you're speaking to a group or an individual who will be opposed to what you have to say, start with your weakest reason and build to the strongest point.

- 8. **Be brief:** Too many words can bury key ideas. Enough said.
- 9. **Watch your language.** Words embody thoughts, shape opinions, and direct actions. Words can move a nation, sink a stock, or launch a war. They can mend a marriage or end a partnership. Some word choices simply turn people off because they are tactless, tasteless, or pompous. Sift such from your language. Plan your phrasing before you open your mouth.
- 10. **Make sure your body language supports rather than sabotages your point:** "This new program will ultimately save us time" said with cowering posture translates to "I'm unsure whether this new program will save us time." When there's a contradiction between the visual and the vocal, body language trumps.

The ability to persuade makes leadership possible.

As a Hall of Fame keynote speaker and bestselling author of 46 books including What MORE Can I Say (<http://booherresearch.us9.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=81666fc184a599e7d421ad033&id=f79a8b4d19&e=03f61ca28a>) and Creating Personal Presence (<http://booherresearch.us9.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=81666fc184a599e7d421ad033&id=106094a8da&e=03f61ca28a>), Dianna Booher works with organizations to communicate clearly and with leaders to expand their influence by a stronger personal presence. National media such as Good Morning America, USA Today, WSJ, Forbes, CNN, Fast Company, Bloomberg, Success, and Entrepreneur frequently interview her on critical workplace communication issues. www.BooherResearch.com (<http://www.booherresearch.com/>) 817-283-2333 @DiannaBooher (<https://twitter.com/diannaboohier>)

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