

# Persuasive messaging

Psychology



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**Persuasive Messaging Techniques** The foot-in-the-door persuasion technique is very well researched and can be very effective in persuading a person to say yes. It begins with a small and simple request that is easier to say yes to because agreeing to the request doesn't require a big investment in time and/or money. Research shows that after a person says yes to a seller it is easier for them to say yes to even bigger requests that ask more of the buyer in terms of time or money. After someone says yes to an initial request they often feel a bond between themselves and the seller, which makes them more likely to say yes to further, more significant requests. The foot-in-the-door approach has been proven to be especially effective when the request has to do with a social cause that a person supports. If a person supports a cause they are more likely to consistently say yes to requests for that cause. Additionally, this approach has been shown to be effective in online selling. The foot-in-the-door approach will obviously be ineffective if the customer just isn't interested in the product or the cause or if the initial request asks too much of them.

The low-ball persuasion technique is very common, especially in the automobile selling process, for example. The first psychological process that this technique utilizes is commitment on the part of the buyer. Once the buyer commits to an initial price the desire is typically to maintain that commitment to the seller. Going back on a commitment to purchase is contrary to the social norm of acting and appearing to be consistent. Low-balling is a very effective technique because it's often against a person's inclinations to say no to something they have already committed to purchasing. Like the foot-in-the door technique, the low-ball technique works best on buyers who are already interested in the product. When a person

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goes to look at a car, for example, they are typically interested in buying a car.

The that's-not-all persuasion technique is also very well researched and is often effective. This process works by offering an initial item, called an anchor, and then adding something (or several things) to that offer in order to "sweeten the deal" so to speak. This arouses the social norm of reciprocity. Now the deal looks better to the buyer because they feel like they are getting additional items for free. This technique is very common in infomercials and on shopping channels and the audience most likely to fall for the that's-not-all technique would be those who are impulse buyers.

There is a significant segment of people who feel that many products advertised on infomercials are scams and they are selling inferior products. On the other hand, channels like QVC are more successful with their that's-not-all technique because they have a better reputation than, say, a relatively unknown product would.

Of these three persuasive messaging techniques, the resistance to persuasion is generally lowest for the low-ball approach, which has been shown in various studies to be a more effective technique than the foot-in-the-door approach. The that's-not-all approach has also been found to increase compliance in the buyer, therefore the resistance to this persuasion technique is also low; that is if the buyer doesn't have a lot of time to think about what's happening.

As a society, we are all more vulnerable to these persuasive techniques than we think we are. It is easy to say that we would never fall for such obvious selling techniques but when we are actually put in those types of situations it becomes a whole new ball game because we are fighting against our own

psychological tendencies.

## References

Feenstra, J. (2011). Introduction to social psychology. Bridgepoint Education, Inc.