



CATS

RECRUIT

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INFLUENCE is like confidence. Everyone would like a little — or a lot — more.

The ability to influence the way others think, feel and/or act is a key ingredient of success in any area of business. This is most obvious in sales.

Like choosing the ingredients for a meal, success depends on the right mix in the right quantities. Influencing others is difficult and it is rare that one ingredient on its own will be sufficient.

Know your client

What ingredients you use will be determined by who your clients are. This is why it is helpful to know as much as possible about them, especially their current knowledge of and attitude towards your business and product.

This could be done with research beforehand or ascertained with astute questioning early in the sales conversation.

When you know your clients well, a mix of the right “ingredients” will guide your dealings with them:

1 Your credibility: You can trust what I say.”

This includes your trustworthiness, sincerity, reputation — basically, anything your clients will know about you and your company. If your main credibility is personal, tell stories that make your experience and ethics obvious.

If the main credibility comes from your organisation, find a way to impress on clients its size, expertise, experience and so on. This needs to be one of the first tools used because it affects how well the others work.

2 Similarity and laughter:

“I’m just like you, so I know how you feel.”
If I see you as being similar to me, I’m more inclined to like you. If I like you, I am more likely to be influenced by you.

This is why it is so important to identify what you and your clients have in common. This common ground provides an opportunity to explore the use of humour.

Latest research shows that people are most susceptible to new ideas after they have laughed.

3 Reciprocity: “After all I have done for you, it’s the least you can do.”

If I do something for you, then you will feel an obligation to me. Smart sales professionals are con-

Suit the dish to the diner

Use the right ingredients to influence your clients and you will have a recipe for success



Find out what makes your customer tick so that you can customise sales strategies to attract him to your product.

tinually making deposits in their “leverage bank” with key clients and prospects.

Generally, they will not know when they will need to draw on this deposit, but they do know how valuable it is in this hyper-competitive world to have this buffer.

4 Social proof: “Everyone else like you is doing it, so there must be something in it.”

People are more likely to be persuaded if they see others who are their professional equal (or better) leading the way. It is most effective if they see these early adopters as being similar to them.

5 Scarcity: “They’re going fast...don’t miss out.”

We all hate missing out. Marketing companies spend millions on “limited-time offers” because they work!

People are so busy with different demands for their attention that you are most likely to have success if you instil in them a sense of urgency.

Encourage them to buy early (for example, the first five to buy receive a bonus) and let them know there is limited stock available.

6 Belonging: “You’ll love being part of this.”

Humans are social beings. We all want to be part of a group or, at least, we don’t want to be the one left out.

This might involve tapping into your clients’ obligations or responsibilities as part of a community or their desire to be part of the “in” group. This fits with the current trend to market via social media.

7 Imagination: “Just imagine it looking like it should in the perfect world.”

Tapping into people’s imagination with strong images and sensory language gives you access to one of the most powerful areas of the brain.

Management professor Noel Tichy said: “If you want them to venture into new places, take them

there first in their imagination.”

Sell the vision by painting pictures in your clients’ minds and reinforce this by involving the senses: “Just imagine setting out on a beautiful day in your new yacht. Feel the wind on your face, smell the salt air!” The sharper the image, the more persuasive it is.

8 Aversion to loss: “You don’t want to lose this.”

People are more likely to be moved to action by the fear of losing something they already have than by the prospect of gaining something new. What possessions, relationships or freedoms are under threat?

9 Ego: “You deserve it.”

Never underestimate the desire to look good. It is why some people spend double what they need to on a car.

Most who are motivated by this, however, would deny it, so a subtler approach is required. The appeal to logic is often used as a cover, for example: “I bought the luxury car because of the resale value!”

In knowing what makes your client tick, you can appeal to a combination of ingredients — for example, his need to trust you, his fear of missing out and his ego — to close the sale.

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