



The Persuader – How to use emotional persuasion to win more business by Marcus Corah

Content = *** Readability = *** Clarity & Structure = ***

www.marcuscorah.com/bonus2461.html

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THE BOOK IN A NUTSHELL

Any new business presentation needs to engage clients both emotionally as well as logically. This book provides some practical tips from the world of NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) on how to manage the emotions of yourself and your clients.

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KEY THEMES

There is a big difference between understanding something logically and committing to it emotionally. Pitches are won through not only 'ticking' all the rational boxes but in creating a deeper emotional connection with the people.

1) Maximising pre-pitch meetings

Build Rapport - The key is to build rapport. To do this you need to see the situation through their eyes. By understanding their world you build trust. And the more they trust you, the more of their world they will share with you.

The more you are 'like' them, the more likely they will like you e.g. your beliefs, values, interests – even down to the type of language (the specific words they use) or clothes you wear.

Mirroring and Matching - Suggestion is to match their style – if they write short emails, reply back in short emails. How they sign off, so you sign off. Repeat their key phrases. On the phone match their same energy level (tonality, slow versus fast, loud vs soft etc). In meetings, do not try to mirror or match them – instead see it as a sign that rapport has been built. Subtle approaches can be used such as matching breathing.

Building an emotional connection – Smile! ☺. Engage eye contact. The way we feel emanates out from us – so need to manage our own emotional state. Physiology can make a big difference to our moods.

Building rapport in groups – The first person to present should have the best rapport with the client (or good at quickly building rapport). If the last person had good rapport, then stand in the same space (to create a spatial anchor - If not then stand elsewhere!). To further build, begin by matching the last person's posture, gestures, speed and tone of delivery.

Identify the person in the client team who is the rapport leader.

The 3 key questions that win pitches.

1) What is important to you about....?

i.e. discovering their values, as these are the cornerstones of building rapport (as well as addressing their real needs/focus - something you can leverage in the pitch).



You can ask this question around a range of different issues e.g. ..about this project?about the work you do? etc. When given the reply write down their specific words.

Values and beliefs will also be covertly delivered in their language – so listen out for “I want to/have to/need to...”

In the pitch meeting, attach their value to your key proposition/benefit (using their same language). Other subtler ways is to deliver their values back through vox pops. If you want to help the client choose one of your routes, attach their values just to your favoured route.

2) **Is there any reason why you might not hire us?**

i.e understanding their beliefs. *We* seek information to support our beliefs. These values and beliefs are the primary drivers of our behaviour. People are very emotionally attached to their values and beliefs (and thus referencing their beliefs and values can trigger positive emotions - and vice versa).

The clients will have both positive and negative beliefs about you/your company. Part of the pitch will be to neutralise/breakup that limiting belief and replace it with a more empowering one (whilst reinforcing any positive beliefs they hold about you).

N.B You need to have built rapport to be able to ask this question overtly (and chose your moment).

Since beliefs are housed in emotions, pure logic does not often defeat it (and may in some cases further exacerbate the belief). Some ways to defeat them are:

-*Resolve the issue by doing the obvious first* – e.g. if they think you are expensive, reduce costs or offer more added value.

-*Actions speak louder than words* – Don’t say – do!

-*Testimonials* – get other clients etc to record video testimonials that address the key barrier.

-*Details* – If the client thinks you are expensive, provide a very detailed breakdown of all costs. If they think you are poor at process/delivery, give them a detailed process/timing plan.

-*Metaphor/Story* – Allows you to address the belief in a subtler way without directly addressing it. NB When you tell the story, you do not need to add in the moral/meaning as people are meaning makers and will reach the conclusion themselves.



Pacing/Leading – Pacing means to match their current belief system and then slowly lead them to a new position. Acknowledging their current belief encourages them to listen to your new point of view.

Use a pre-frame – A pre-frame contextualises the meeting – it creates a positive association and thus addresses the underlying issue before one gets to it (cf ‘Buy now, pay in 12 months’ pre-frames the issue over affordability). An example the author references is talking to people about presentation skills. Before he gets to the point where people express their concerns about the fear of presenting he says, “If you are standing up here, then you are getting paid. If you’re sitting down then you are paying. Who wants to go through life paying and not getting paid?”

A more advanced form is a future pre-frame where you talk about the future when the issue is no longer an issue. For example, a client might be concerned about upheaval from their existing agency, so a pre-frame would instead focus on the future benefits (once the account had been bedded down).

-Use a reframe – A reframe helps you see the same thing through a new perspective (which often shifts the belief) – it’s just another way of looking at something (cf the glass is half empty or half full?)

-Be calm, confident and authoritative – The aura you project at the time of discussing any areas of perceived weakness can help allay their concerns/beliefs (cf the power of non verbal communication if you are unsure).

It is suggested you use a number of these together to try to help shift the limiting belief.

3) **Why are we on your pitch list?**

i.e. the positive beliefs they have about you/your company. This allows you to structure your pitch to capitalize on these.

The importance of self-belief – We unconsciously communicate through our body language and tonality we use. This will be picked up (often unconsciously) by the clients. Thus if you don’t believe you can win, then your body language, facial expressions, tonality (and often the language you use) will be shouting ‘Loser!’ In order to convince them in you, you need to believe in yourself and your product. You must believe that you *can make a real difference to their business*. Pitching is more a mindset than a set of words.



2) Designing emotionally persuasive content

You need to be aware of the emotions your clients are going through and what emotional states you want them to feel at different stages in the meeting e.g. curiosity, excitement, relief, commitment etc.

Whilst you may need to raise some negative issues, it is advised not to linger too long on these otherwise you start to anchor a negative emotion to your pitch.

In your presentation be totally focused on the benefits you bring to them (it's about them not you) – the objective of the pitch is to demonstrate how your company can uniquely deliver the results they want. Ensure your pitch emotionally anchors you to their future prosperity (and not just to a process).

How to structure your presentation – The 4MAT system – People are different. Research by McCarthy identified that people fall into four categories when it comes to their learning style:

Why? Learners – 35% people

What? Learners – 22% people

How? Learners – 18% people

What if? Learners – 25% people

Why? Learners seek meaning. Why should they listen? Why should they do X? These tend to be 'big picture' people. Use *Why*'s to set up the meeting.

What? Learners are interested in knowledge. They want to know the facts and minute details e.g. "What are you actually proposing?" - they are the note takers.

How? Learners – These are the common sense learners who are interested in practicalities. They want to know how to apply the learnings e.g. "How are we going to make it happen?"

What if? Learners – These are the people who learn primarily through personal experience and self-discovery. Thus they want to know the consequences of various actions e.g. "Can we use your service over here as well?"

Thus each section of the presentation needs to cover all learning types. The key though is to ensure they know you have a solution to their needs (and then provide the substantiation the different types need to make them believe in you).

How to structure your presentation – Pacing before Leading – The presentation needs to start with facts/views that they agree with, before slowly starting to lead them to new information/thoughts. Jump too fast and it can confuse or at worst create disagreement and disengagement. Three examples of 'Yes that's true' are often enough before you can start to lead them to new material. When developing your initial 'leading' statements it's better if they are not definitive but phrased as a possibility (e.g. "can", "may", "could", "should" as opposed to "will" and "must" etc).



Furthermore, start to pace the energy of the clients at the start. Often it's best to start off slow, before building up to your natural pace. When you have important pieces of information to get over, then best to slow down (and often pause to give it a little more emphasis).

To 'manage' the question and answer session, when you want to invite questions, lift your tonality at the end – “Any questions?”↗. When you want to discourage questions, then drop the tonality at the end – “Any more questions?”↘.

At the end of each section ask yourselves 4 questions:

- Who has had all the attention?
- Who haven't we connected with recently?
- How much do the individuals believe they can have what they want?
- What emotions are the key decision makers feeling?

Handing over to the next presenter is a great place to embed some key messages subtly. When introducing them, you can give them a bit of background that may address some of their negatives, support their values or reinforce the perception that you as a company can help deliver what they want e.g. “This is Steve, he devised the strategy that led to the successful launch of...”

It is key that the presentation ends on an emotional high. Do not overload the ending – keep it simple (3 key points only you want them to take away) and keep it focused on how you are going to help deliver what they want.

How to structure your presentation – Speaking the same language as your clients –

Different people store and access information in one of four modalities: Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic (i.e. emotion or feeling) or digitally (i.e. logically). Their language they use helps us understand their favoured modality.

For example, Visual will use words like “I see”, “It appears to me”, “That's clear to me”, “This all seems a bit hazy to me”.

An Auditory person will use words like “That doesn't sound right to me”, “That rings a bell”, “I hear what you're saying”.

Kinaesthetic (emotional/feeling people) use words like “I feel...” “I'm not comfortable with that”, “If we can grasp this now”.

Digital (or logical) people will use words like “I think”, “I know”, “I understand”, “The best process is”, and “You won't change my thinking”.

Thus one needs to weave the different modalities into the presentation so each type in the audience is able to fully understand what you are saying.



3) Advanced pitch strategies

Positive language – If you make your clients feel good, special or important then they are more likely to want to work with you. The more positive your language, the better you create an internal representation of you/your company in their minds. One way of doing this is with the use of language.

Use positive language wherever possible (as often more than one way of phrasing something – e.g. “You’re wrong” versus “You’re not always right”). Also use emotionally powerful words as they help shift your client’s emotions – especially emotive words they use.

If people start ‘drifting off’ insert phrases with key wake-up words like “Re-focus...” ‘Now...’ “Look...” “OK...”

The power of social proof – Video testimonials are a powerful way to reinforce your core message, your strengths (or eliminate your weaknesses). The best ones are where there is a clear conversion (with you as the axis of change).

Storytelling (metaphor) – The power of story is that it can help shift minds without conscious resistance because the core message is delivered in an oblique, memorable and emotionally charged way (it avoids the rational, critical thinking process of the conscious brain).

There are three types of story (which the author calls metaphor): ‘Emotion inducing metaphors’, ‘Meaning inducing metaphors’ and ‘Isomorphic metaphors’.

For any story/metaphor to be powerful it must be interesting and relevant to the client. Ideally it’s a personal story.

Emotion inducing metaphors – We know our own emotional state can affect our performance and decision-making. First you need to decide what is the appropriate emotion you wish the client to experience. Then think of a time when you have had that same emotion and choose an incident that is most relevant.

When you retell it, try to deeply re-engage with it, as then your non-verbal communication will also kick in. Try to embellish it with detail and emotional language to help bring it alive (as well as using the four modalities if possible).

It's best to talk around the emotion rather than just state it e.g. don't just say, “I got curious” Instead tell them about how you became curious. Stick to just one emotional state per story, and do not try to overlay too many emotions close to each other (for its impact takes time to work through).



The timing of this metaphor could even be before the meeting (and then reference it at the key point in the presentation – preferably delivering it from the same spot you first told the story).

Open loops – Rather than finishing the story you leave it open and hanging –preferably close to its emotional peak. This retains attention (as everyone wants to know the ending). A good place to deliver your content is at this heightened emotional state. At some point you will need to close the loop!

Meaning inducing metaphors – Ideal for when you want to pass on advice but you know would be rejected if delivered straight. First start with the purpose – what is the message you want delivered. Then search through your personal stories of times when you learned this lesson yourself. As before, fully engage in the story when telling it.

The best structure for such a story is *Incident, Point, and Benefit*.

Incident is the ‘inciting’ event that changed the status quo. The *Point* is the message (which is almost always kept hidden in its purest form). The *Benefit* is the positive outcome from the event (this provides the listener a reason to engage with the point/message).

The author’s example was walking to his daughter’s school when held up by ladies with their prams (*Incident*), The *Benefit* was spotting a £5 note on the ground that he used to treat his child and create more ‘Dad time’. The *Point* (unsaid) was to get the clients to take a different route.

Iso-morphic metaphors – Use these when you wish to covertly provide your clients a solution by using a metaphorical situation that runs parallel to their own issues (and ultimately leads to a solution that could be applicable to the client’s problems).

First you need to understand your client’s issue. Then find a story that is a good vehicle to carry the solution. Often this will mean drawing on a wider experience than your own. The story needs to be far enough removed so the story remains a story at the conscious level.

The author references an example where he uses an iso-morphic metaphor with his students to pre-teach a solution. He also embeds unconsciously clear direction within the metaphor which is talking directly to the student (even though in the story it appears to be aimed at the person in the story) – e.g. “If you want to meet someone who is not interested in meeting you, *you have to turn the reason into a benefit...You’re smart, you’ll figure it out*”.

You can also link their values into the story. Furthermore you can use an iso-morphic metaphor to help address difficult questions from the client that could lead to a negative response. For example, think of a parallel situation with another client that had been resolved positively (it might be worthwhile pre-guessing the difficult questions and preparing a story for these).



Pictures, colours and shapes – A picture creates many associations (= meanings) that can have positive application. For example if you want to suggest growth, you can use images of seedlings, saplings, and trees in your presentation (which can be supported by using green colours on charts that reference growth). Likewise shapes – put in square boxes absolute facts. When you want subjective information to be perceived as fact also put it in a square box. Furthermore, you can pace the client colours into your presentation to help build greater rapport.

Spatial anchoring – We all have a time-line (where we spatially place the past and the future - which is often left to right or behind and in front of us). One technique is to always present the past on the client's left and then present your future solutions on the client's right.

CRITICISMS

This is an easy (and short) book to read, full of simple tips to improve your power of pitching. This book is a mix of some basic stuff most people will know, juxtaposed with some very sophisticated techniques that even I as a Master Practitioner in NLP was unaware of! Furthermore some tips are more powerful than others (e.g. ensuring absolute authenticity and storytelling versus using client colours in your presentation).

It is more of a practical tips type of book than it is a theoretical tome. It's also clever as he uses many of his techniques throughout the book (and then reveals what he has done). The slightly rubberized feel of the cover is also a great example of using tactile sensation to make you think the book is distinctive.

My biggest reservation is that some (not all) of the techniques drift towards the moral equator (which to be fair the author does cover right up front). I agree that we all subtly do use some of these tools (often unconsciously) but I personally feel uneasy about being seen to covertly manipulate people – so I share this book as much to make people aware of such techniques being used on them as for those who want to use the techniques themselves.

PAC

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