

HOW TO PERSUADE PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT TO BE PERSUADED

GET WHAT YOU WANT—EVERY TIME!



Joel Bauer
&
Mark Levy



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More Praise for *How to Persuade People Who Don't Want to Be Persuaded*

"Joel Bauer and Mark Levy draw back the curtain and let you see, hear, touch, and use the most mysterious mechanisms of success—*influence and persuasion*. If you're thinking lightweight cunning or heavyweight sociology, forget it. We're talking about an ancient craft our ancestors knew that our generation forgot. This book will teach you how to wield your best ideas to influence others with the mystical dexterity of a caveman who strikes a flint *just so*—and creates fire."

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"*How to Persuade People Who Don't Want to Be Persuaded* is candid, insightful, educational, and fun. Read it and put some magic into your business life."

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—Bob Bedbury, director of Business Development, Gumax Advertising

"Master Joel and Mark's influence strategies and you can become the business world's next pied piper."

—Stewart Levine, author of *The Book of Agreement* and *Getting to Resolution*

"I found influence principles I could immediately apply to my business on almost every page."

—David Goldsmith, founder, MetaMatrix Consulting, Inc.

"Joel Bauer is such a rock star. He has shown up with his own brand of real magic and it will rock your world. Read every word and read it again."

—Angelica J. Holiday, TV producer, entertainment/advertising/marketing & brand consultant

"A must read and a fun read for business people at any level. The book grabs you the moment you pick it up and is full of underground practices, which will have you persuading like a professional pitchman."

—Thomas J. Waletzki, president, Eizo Nanao Technologies

"*How to Persuade People Who Don't Want to Be Persuaded* will shake you out of your comfort zone and, in the process, draw others to your ideas. A wonderfully unorthodox look at how to influence and get attention."

—John Izzo, author of *Second Innocence: Rediscovering Joy & Wonder* and *Awakening the Corporate Soul*

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For my mother, Carol, who never said, "It cannot be done," and my wife, Cherie, who said, "Is that all?"

—J. B.

For my mother, Rhoda, who read me *Treasure Island*, and my wife, Stella, who can persuade with the best of them.

—M. L.



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Life has dealt me a great hand, and the cards will remain in play until my last breath.

—J. B.

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Finally, I would like to thank the man himself, Joel Bauer. Joel is a masterful businessperson, performer, and friend. If you ever get the chance to see him in action, take it!

—M. L.



DRAW IN THE LISTENER

What you're about to read is a bit frightening. Sometimes seminar attendees walk out on me as I deliver this material because they're disturbed by what they hear. These are smart people walking out. I don't blame them for leaving. This is the stuff of nightmares.

As you continue reading, you're going to learn to persuade in a way you never imagined possible. Not in a Dale Carnegie way. Not by smiling and tossing in people's first names as you speak with them. This is about getting people to do what you want. Particularly strangers. (When a *Wired* reporter saw hundreds of strangers follow my commands in unison, he called the display "a feat of mass obedience that must be seen to be believed.")

My persuasion model is unusual, but deadly effective. I didn't read about it in a magazine or develop it with a team of university scholars. Instead, it comes from my 37 years' experience in front of audiences and from my study of those true masters of influence, show folk; mostly show folk in the "dark arts."

Yes, all I know about persuasion I've learned from carnies, fakirs, hypnotists, magicians, mentalists, spiritualists, and, partic-

ularly, pitchmen. Naturally, I'm taking liberties here with who I call show folk, but let's not split hairs. Their methods are the important thing, not the taxonomy.

These mentors of mine, whom you'll learn about throughout the book, share several traits: If they don't persuade, they starve; their strategies may involve outright deception; and they use, for the most part, entertainment as a means of changing minds. For want of a better term, let's call their ways "theatrical," and my model the "Theatrical Persuasion Model." (Things always seem more real when you name them; there's your first lesson.)

So if you're ready for an underground education in influence, read on. If you're anxious to learn what magicians dub "the real work," this is the only place to find it. It's all very doable, and you'll be able to use the model no matter what your situation—that is, if you don't let your fears get the best of you.

Reader, I just hit you with an influence technique: the Fright Challenge. Liken it to the carnival barker's ballyhoo used to snare people strolling the midway: "Ladies and gentlemen, can you bear it? Sho-cking! Horr-i-fy-ing! A living, breathing nightmare! The most intelligent among you will want to keep walking!" The more the carny protests, the larger the crowd grows.

If I was successful with my pitch, you didn't notice you were being influenced. Or, if you realized it, you were at least intrigued enough to read this far. Whatever your reaction, I now have your attention, and I intend to keep it.

You can rely upon the Fright Challenge whatever your audience's size and intellectual makeup. Everyone—and I mean everyone—responds to this simple tactic.

I used a lengthy challenge to open this chapter because you can build slowly on paper. Readers like to feel the timbre of a writer's voice and see how he or she goes about developing an argument. In person, though, it's a different story; if you take too long setting the challenge, you cross the line from provocateur to menace.

When the people I'm trying to influence are standing before me and want to know how I earn a living, my Fright Challenge is to

the point: "Are you sure you want to know? It's a little frightening. Most people can't handle it." When they say yes, and they always do, I conspiratorially add: "Move in closer. I don't want everyone hearing this." Suddenly, I have their attention in a way that makes them hungry for my words. They're mine for the moment.

Reading *How to Persuade People Who Don't Want to Be Persuaded* will be an experience for you. Much of what you're about to learn is available nowhere else.

Ladies and gentlemen, can you bear it? It's overview time!

OVERVIEW

Who Should Read This Book?

I wrote it predominantly for businesspeople. My techniques will help executives, managers, entrepreneurs, salespeople, marketers, advertising staff, human resources personnel, presenters, job seekers, and just about anybody looking for a way to make people receptive to suggestions.

Of course, you don't have to be in business to profit from this book. Anyone who wants to influence others to his or her way of thinking will want to read it. That audience includes activists, counselors, negotiators, performers, physicians, politicians, public speakers, and teachers.

An audience that deserves special mention is singles. My persuasion strategies are naturals when it comes to meeting and impressing people. If you're a Casanova- or vamp-in-training, you've come to the right place.

What Is the Book's High Concept?

Before I answer, let me explain what a high concept is. The principle is critical if you want to be a powerful persuader. The term *high concept* is most often used in the TV and film industries, particularly during pitch meetings, in which writers throw condensed ideas at a studio executive, hoping that the executive will buy one of them and turn it into a series or a movie.

Those condensed ideas are high concepts. They take a complex plot and reduce it to its most compelling point. The resulting sentence or phrase is what the writer fires at the executive.

What's the most famous high concept ever pitched? According to "Perfect Pitch," a TV documentary, it was delivered by Aaron Spelling to sell his proposed series *Nightingales*. Spelling pitched the series as "nurses in wet t-shirts." The studio bought it immediately.

So What Is This Book's High Concept?

It shows you how to persuade by using the techniques of professional pitchmen. That concept may not be as sexy as Spelling's, but it's accurate. This book brings the secrets of show folk to the boardroom. It teaches you how to use entertainment to influence.

Think these premises sound odd? Then I suggest you switch on your television. If the success of television has taught us anything, it's this: People will open themselves up to a commercial message *if* you entertain them. Take away the entertainment, and the viewer surfs off to another station while the sponsor's message goes unheard.

Product sales rise and fall based upon the entertainment value of their messages. A message that tickles the public can be worth billions. At times, an entertaining message may be the only thing separating one product from another.

Bottled water is a good example. It's a \$35 billion a year industry. That's \$35 billion for a product not substantially different from what you can get out of your faucet.

Obviously, the people in that industry are bright. They not only created a market, but they work hard at making each brand seem different from its competitor. One water is from a stream. One is from the mountains. One is from France. One has added vitamins. One comes in a squirt bottle for people on the go. The list goes on.

I would argue that very little separates one water from the other. If you were to conduct a taste test among the top three brands, I don't think you'd find an obvious winner.

The thing that really separates these products is their companies' positioning strategies—and the entertainment principles each uses in its marketing message. I've seen brands advertised by models in flowing robes, by glamorous movie stars, and by beautiful, sweating athletes.

Models, movie stars, and athletes have little to do with water. They have a lot to do with telling an attention-grabbing dramatic story, fast. In other words, they're there to entertain you. For no other reason.

Perhaps the entertainment component in bottled water is subtle. After all, most companies in the industry take a dignified approach to pitching their product. It's not so with beer.

The beer industry is all about associating its product with good times and wild entertainment. To push their product, brewers have used a wide variety of entertaining means: They've flown blimps over sporting events; run contests with a billion-dollar prize; and aired commercials featuring women wrestling in mud, a dog with human girlfriends, frogs croaking a beer's name, and a football game played between rival bottles of beer.

With exaggerated vehicles like those, it's easy to dismiss the brilliance of the beer industry. That is, until you realize one thing: In 2002, beer sales totaled \$74.4 billion. Say what you like. Entertainment sells.

Will My Techniques Require You to Become an Entertainer?

You will not have to sing, dance, act, recite, get up in front of crowds, or wrestle in mud, unless you want to. When I talk about entertainment as a persuader, I mean that you will use compelling, often whimsical strategies designed to put people in a receptive mood for what you have to offer.

And keep in mind, entertainment isn't necessarily light-hearted. A drama is entertaining. So is a horror film. In the work we'll be doing together, you'll be using the full range of human emotion to make your point forcefully.

What Are Some of the Techniques?

You've already experienced at least two techniques. The Fright Challenge was one, and contained within it was a second technique: *sampling*. If you want to persuade people, you're going to have to figure out ways of letting them sample your suggestion, idea, service, or product. Otherwise, they'll doubt you, and that doubt may keep them from acting on your wishes.

I opened with the Fright Challenge because it's an attention-grabber *and* it acted as a sample of what you're going to learn. If you thought the challenge flimflam, then you instantly knew this book isn't for you. Conversely, if you thought the challenge intriguing, then you're no doubt eager to tear through the rest of this book and make *its* strategies *your* strategies.

Sampling helps people draw conclusions quickly and honestly. It's an ethical way to win them over to your side. Later, you'll learn the best ways to offer samples in situations professional and personal.

Besides the Fright Challenge and sampling, you'll also learn how to persuade using dozens of other tactics. Among them: the Body Metaphor, the Paper Metaphor, the Quick Pitch, and the Platform Pitch. All are entertaining. All are effective. You and the people you're persuading will have fun while you get your way.

Of course, not every technique in this book functions solely to entertain. Your offerings should be flavored with entertainment principles, not drowning in them. While you're learning to entertain, you'll also be learning good, solid business and influence practices.

I don't want to leave this introductory chapter without putting the spotlight on an influence technique particularly dear to me: the Transformation Mechanism.

What Is a Transformation Mechanism?

It is a demonstration that gains your audience's attention, lowers their defenses, and serves as a metaphor for your message. *It's a trick that makes a point.* A major point. One that might spell the dif-

ference between someone's taking your suggestion or dismissing it. Let me give you an example of a Transformation Mechanism I used to make a \$45,000 sale. It involved a rubber band.

My prospect was the head of marketing for a West Coast software firm. Her company was renting major booth space at an upcoming convention, and she had contacted me as a possible hire for the show. My job? To act as the company's pitchman and draw people to her booth.

Because it was she who had called the meeting, I thought the sale would be easy. Was I ever wrong. When I asked her about her company's goals for the show, she was vague. When I showed her client testimonials and photographs of me drawing overflow crowds at previous shows, she glanced at them as if I had handed her yesterday's newspaper.

She thanked me for coming and said she'd get back to me. But I wasn't leaving. The meeting had cost me time and money, and her get-back-to-me speech wasn't giving me false hope. If I left, I would never hear from her again.

I rose from my chair and pretended to pack up. As I shut my laptop and repositioned imaginary items in my briefcase, I asked her the same questions I had just asked her, only I softened them. For instance, rather than asking about her company's goals for the upcoming show, I asked about her best moments from previous shows, and how she planned on duplicating them. After a few moments, I smoked out her objection to my services.

Her company had always relied on winning over early adopters who would get the word out about the new software to their fellow hard-core users. This strategy had served her firm well. It had doubled in size over the last three years by catering to early adopters.

My service didn't fit that early-adopter model at all—at least not in her mind. What I'm all about is drawing the largest trade-show crowds possible, and that's not what she thought she needed. "The masses aren't going to buy our product," she said, "so I see no reason to attract and entertain them." She confessed

that the only reason I had been called in was because her firm's CEO had seen me draw crowds for a rival, and he thought it might be a good idea to hear what I had to say.

"Let me make sure I understand," I said. "You believe that I can draw a mob to your booth, but you think that's overkill. You believe that thousands of undifferentiated onlookers are a wasted expense, a distraction. They may even keep away the folks you really want: the early adopters." She agreed, that was her dilemma.

I knew what I had to do. I had to transform the moment for her. I had to take her from where she was and move her to a different vantage point. Words alone weren't going to do it. *She needed the experience of seeing her dilemma anew.*

I noticed a rubber band encircling her wrist and asked her to remove it.

"Imagine that your small rubber band is your small group of early adopters," I said. "Those are the people you really want at the show. They spell the difference between your company's success and failure. Agreed?"

"Agreed."

"Hold one end of that rubber band at your left fingertips, the other end at your right fingertips, and press the band against your upper lip." The woman looked at me as if I were fresh from the asylum.

"Don't worry," I said, "you know I make my living as a showman. I want to drive home a point, but I want to do it in a special way. Please put the band against your lip." She complied.

"Does the band feel hot or cold?" I asked.

"Cold."

"Good. Now imagine that besides that small band of adopters, hundreds of other people come along and expand the crowd. To get a vivid image of what I'm talking about, expand the band. Stretch it between your fingers until it nearly snaps." She did.

"Your large rubber band now symbolizes the mob surrounding your booth if I was pitching. Keep the band taut, and put it up to your lips again. What do you feel?"

"Oh my god!" she said, "that's remarkable. The band is hot."

"That's right," I said, "It's hot, not because of magic, but because of physics. When you stretched the rubber, you excited its electrons and heated up the band.

"The same kind of excitement-and-heat reaction is what happens when you expand your trade-show audiences, too.

"When you have a big crowd, passersby realize something big is happening in the booth. The crowd's size creates an expectation, an excitement, a heat. The people sauntering past stop and wonder, 'What are all these people looking at? What do they know that I don't?' Then they run to join the crowd, making it bigger.

"Now, some of these people running to join the crowd will be early adopters. Early adopters always want to be on the inside. If they spot a crowd and they don't know what it's about, they'll practically shove their way to the front. I've seen this happen over and over through the years.

"My crowds will pull in more early adopters than you've ever had, precisely because my crowds are so big, so excited, so full of energy. A crowd draws a larger crowd!"

She sat silently for a few seconds, playing with the rubber band. Then she asked me questions: about my fees, my methods, the logistics of my performances. When I left her office, it was with a signed contract.

Transformation Mechanisms help you make your point in a way more effective than straightforward logic. They work for the same reason *Death of a Salesman* forces us to reexamine our values and *It's a Wonderful Life* lets us re-see our place in the world. Their lessons come to us in a Trojan horse. They appeal to us because of story, color, and entertainment. They touch us in a way that bald information misses.

More than one-third of this book is devoted to the Transformation Mechanism. You can use these mechanisms in any situation you can imagine: to rouse a workforce, to close a sale, or to get children to clean their room.

Who Am I to Teach You These Methods?

I am Joel Bauer, professional trade show pitchman. I persuade for a living. Fortune 500 companies hire me to stand atop a 26-inch-high riser in front of their booths and pitch their products.

What do these companies have invested in a typical trade show? They've spent up to ten million dollars on booth construction, five hundred thousand dollars to rent floor space, and hundreds of thousands more on union fees, drayage charges, personnel costs, and travel expenses. But those dollars are the least of their concerns.

Often, the future of their organizations rests upon how well they do at the show. If they have a new product rollout, they want the press to see it, the TV cameras to shoot it, and their prospects to buzz about it. A bad show means a bad product launch, and that can sink a company. When people hire me, they have high expectations.

What is the trade-show environment? When you're at a trade show, you're in an environment that can be impersonal and at times brutal. The competition surrounds you, and they want to see you fail badly. And the people you're trying to persuade—the show attendees—are rushing past you. They don't care who you are, how nice you are, how fearful you are, or how superior you think your product is.

Persuading at a trade show is akin to persuading on the street or in the ancient bazaar. There are rules, but few of them are in your favor. It's my responsibility to stop passersby, get them to listen to a product pitch, and coax them into leaving their contact information.

To be cost effective, I can't persuade people to stop one by one. Instead, I must create crowds. Large, scary crowds. I must get so many people to stop and watch and listen and act throughout the day that my client's lead-generation machines are flooded with prospects.

How well do I do? The *Wall Street Journal Online* calls me "the chairman of the board" of corporate trade show rainmaking. *Fast*

Company writes that I'm "an expert at getting the attention of people with lots of choices about where to spend their time."

Even my competitors unintentionally compliment me. They refer to me as "the train wreck," meaning that when I'm pitching there are people laid out everywhere, filling the booth and spilling out into the aisles, making it impossible for anyone to move. I create such pandemonium, they say, that hardly a show goes by from which I am not threatened with expulsion by show management.

Guilty as charged.

I've been pitching at trade shows for 24 years, and in that time I'd estimate that twenty million people have stopped to hear what I had to say, resulting in more than three million leads for my clients.

Who Is the Book's Other Author?

I wrote *How to Persuade People Who Don't Want to Be Persuaded* with my colleague Mark Levy. Mark is an expert pitchman and writer whose skills have helped make his clients more than a billion dollars.

Mark has contributed many of his own influence techniques and anecdotes to this book while working to bring my concepts to life.

What's My Pitch to You?

This isn't an ordinary book on persuasion. It's not a tome on how to control, manipulate, or force others to submit to your will.

Books that promise such adolescent fantasies don't hold water. Their win/lose methods soon turn into lose/lose. Their philosophy goes against the way most of us live, think, and act and doesn't take into account who we are and what we want to offer the world.

I am going to teach you how to persuade in a way that's neither sinister, manipulative, nor zero-sum. I am going to show you how to become influential, charismatic, and magnetic.

You will get what you want by helping others get what they want, and in the process, you will all have a good time.