

The Powerful Employability Skill of Persuasion

Persuasion is the act of being influential. Without the ability to persuade, your ideas won't get far in the work world. By mastering the art of persuasive communication, you can win important backing from the people who matter most.

Persuasion destroyers. To become influential, it's important to first identify why good ideas, suggestions, or requests are ignored or rejected:

- *Assuming that because you think an idea is good others will also.* How you perceive a solution may be different from your coworkers or boss.
- *Trying too hard to look smart.* While you may be sure your suggestion is the right one, being perceived as a know-it-all will create a negative vibe.
- *Talking too much.* You can talk yourself out of being influential. "Talk less and listen more" is very important in persuasion.
- *Offering an opinion prematurely.* Not knowing what you don't know can lead you to speak up too soon. Trying to persuade without all the facts creates a barrier between you and those you want to influence.
- *Showing annoyance or frustration when your opinion or idea is not accepted.* Losers of athletic games are expected to show good sportsmanship. Accepting negative feedback or rejection of your idea is expected in the work world.



How does one become persuasive? You can become persuasive by putting these guidelines into action:

- *Know your audience.* Communication that persuades addresses another person's needs and desires, so identify the needs before trying to persuade.
- *Establish credibility.* To persuade, you must be able to back up your claims with examples, illustrations, testimonials, statistics, or other forms of influence.
- *Show the benefit.* It's easier to persuade if you can explain how using your idea will be beneficial.
- *Use appropriate body language.* If you come across as frustrated or hostile, fail to make eye contact, fidget or use other inappropriate body language, you will be seen negatively.
- *Control your facial expressions.* Your face is a mirror of your emotions. It gives away your feelings. Practice exhibiting an objective or positive facial expression.

Action: Think about one individual who has tried to persuade you about something that you rejected. What recommendation from the effective persuasive techniques would you recommend to the person? Have you tried to persuade and been rejected recently? How could you have approached the person differently?

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Note to instructors: Ability to communicate effectively is the key to persuasion and one of the most important skills for career success. *Job Ready Career Skills* provides 50 lessons on communication that will help your students learn better ways to communicate.

Job Ready Career Skills Communications Lessons

Communicating at Work

Improving Communication Skills
Effective Oral Communication
Effective Written Communication
Effective Nonverbal Skills
Effective Word Use
Giving and Receiving Feedback
Handling Anger
Dealing with Difficult Coworkers
Dealing with a Difficult Boss

Listening

Reasons for Listening
Benefits of Listening
Barriers to Listening
Listening Strategies
Ways We Filter What We Hear
Developing a Listening Attitude
Show You Are Listening
Asking Questions
Obtaining Feedback

Speaking

Using Language Carefully
Showing Confidence
One-on-One Conversations
Small Group Communication
Large Group Communication
Making Speeches
Involving the Audience
Answering Questions
Visual and Media Aids