

Persuasion Tactics

Tactic	Psychological Process
• Door in the face	rule of reciprocity
• Foot-in-the-door	rule of commitment
• Scarcity principle (not in Hockenbury)	
• Appeal to fear (not in Hockenbury)	

Rule of Reciprocity

The rule of reciprocity (or reciprocity norm) is the expectation that when others treat us well, we should respond in kind.

It is important to recognize the rule of reciprocity because if someone is nice to you, you will “unconsciously return the favor”.

- This makes it likely that reporters will actually cover the President if he is nicer to them (although reporters will deny this). If you aren't nice to the President, you won't get access to him, and perhaps fly with him on Air Force One.
- Some businesses ban gifts to managers and employees or gifts from outside contractors. If you received a gift, you feel obligated to reciprocate with favors or contracts.

The way to minimize the rule of reciprocity is to reframe the transaction from a social exchange to an economic exchange.

- Political influence and money: Politicians are more likely to give contributors the benefit of the doubt or give favors for people who helped their political campaign.
- Drug companies and physicians prescriptions. Drug companies spend \$13,000/doctor in “gifts” such as dinners, books, computers, trinkets with the drug companies logo on it, etc. (go to Listen to me! on my web site). Are they more likely to prescribe drugs from that company?

Door in the face

A strategy for gaining concessions after someone is first given the opportunity to turn down a large request (the door in the face). The same requester counter offers with a smaller request that you are more likely to accept than the large request.

<u>Large request:</u>	Can you donate \$200 to our charity?
<u>Smaller request:</u>	No, how about \$20?

The door in the face is a common compliance technique where you make a large request you know is likely going to be turned down. To appear that you are making a concession from this original request, you make a smaller counter offer.

- Compared to the original request, the second request appears to be moderate (the contrast principle).
- The power of the door-in-the-face technique is due to the rule of reciprocity (you feel you need to make a concession, since they did)

Door in the face

Knowledge of compliance techniques can use for personal gain or prevention. Good con artists and "negotiators" can use this to their advantage appear to bargain in "good faith".

Those who take advantage of the door in the face for personal gain can manipulate language to make you feel guilty about not accepting the concession.

It is difficult to distinguish between genuine concessions and false concessions (concessions are made to the original target, and an inflated request is made).

In contract negotiations,

- How would management use the door in the face technique to negotiate for
 - a lower wage,
 - fewer benefits,
 - less vacation time?
- How would the employees use the door in the face technique to negotiate for
 - a lower wage,
 - fewer benefits,
 - less vacation time?

Student examples of door in the face

A salesman comes to your door and offers to sell you a \$1000 set of encyclopedias. You decline the encyclopedia but instead you accept the offer to buy a \$5 dictionary.

Last week my boyfriend called me into the living room and asked if I could go to the store and get him some beer. I was busy and didn't want to even get up to see what he wanted. I definitely didn't want to go to the store. Then he laughed and said that he had beer in the fridge, and asked if I could get him one. I agreed with no hesitation.

Even after begging and pleading with my parents, they still said that they wouldn't buy me a car because they said they couldn't afford it. When I asked them if they would pay for my insurance instead, if I bought a car myself, they agreed.

Other examples of door in the face:

- Gaining donations for political parties. They first ask if you are willing to donate \$100. They follow up by asking if you can't donate \$100, if you can donate \$20.
- G. Gordon Liddy (page 53, Influence by Robert Cialdini): Most experts believe that the Watergate break-in was a huge blunder with a high risk and low pay-off. However, the proposal G. Gordon Liddy made to Magruder and Mitchell to do this was not the first.
- In the 70's series "Happy Days", you couldn't say the word "virgin". To get it past the censors, Gary Marshall would deliberate include it seven times in their scripts, and make a "concession" to bring it down to one—the real target.

Likewise, it was difficult to say "lose my lust", so get it in the script, they put a much stronger phrase, knowing it would get censored.

Foot-in-the-door

The tendency for people who have agreed to a small request to later comply with a larger request. These two requests do not have to be related.

Example:

- From the book Can't Buy my Love by Jean Kilbourne, she argues that it is easier for adolescents to accept a cigarette if they have accepted other tobacco related products (t-shirts, lighters, baseball caps, etc.).
 - Small request = free stuff (baseball caps)
 - Large request = cigarettes

This compliance technique is used to increase the chance that someone to comply with a request after you approach them with another request--regardless if the first request is related to the subsequent request. The original requests are usually relatively small and never coerced by threat or bribe.

Examples of foot-in-the-door technique

- The foot-in-the-door technique can be used to slowly train people to do cruel acts, such as learning to torture people. People are pre-selected on their tendency to be submissive to authority. These people would first start out small and then their assignments would be slowly escalated. They would be
 - guard a prisoner,
 - participate in arrest squads,
 - ordered to occasionally hit the prisoner,
 - observe a torture, and finally
 - practice it.
- The Register Guard asked of I would subscribe to them for 8 weeks. When I said no, they asked if I would accept a free week of service. (it is a combination of two persuasion tactics).

Student examples of Foot-in-the-Door

I was getting ready to go and do my laundry when my roommate asked if she could throw in a couple of her things with mine. I told her that that was fine. She brought in at least three loads of laundry and said "It's a little more than 2 things, but you don't mind, do you?" I felt that since I had already told her it was ok, that I couldn't say no now.

I went to Albertson's with a friend to buy soda. When we passed by the beer she asked me if I could buy a six-pack of bud. Without too much hesitation I agreed. I gave her a twenty-dollar bill to pay for the beer. When we came to the cashier, I was waiting for my change from the twenty. Right when the cashier was going to ring up the beer, my friend turns around and says "Since you have a twenty, can we get a half-rack," I was so pissed and I was put in the spot in front of the cashier and the customers so I didn't refuse.

Scarcity principle

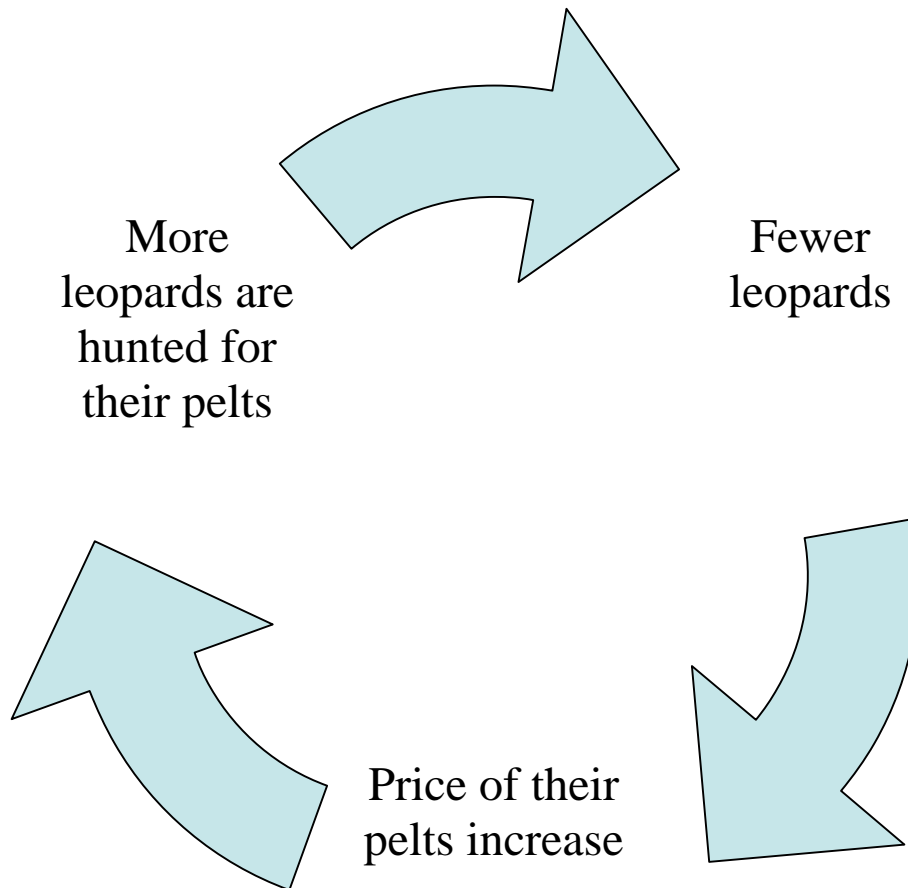
The subjective value of a commodity increases as its availability decreases.



Examples of Scarcity:

- When Dade county banned phosphate based soaps, citizens smuggled phosphate soaps in from neighboring counties. They claimed that the phosphate based soaps cleaned their laundry better, and made their clothes smell fresher.
- Music by Kurt Cobain, Elvis, The Doors is valued more after their deaths.
- Paintings by Van Gogh, Monet, Picasso are valuable because they are scarce.
- Fantastic Four #1, X-men #94 or Spider-Man #1 are more expensive comic books because there are very few copies of them compared to later issues.
- The subjective value of Cabbage Patch dolls, Tickle me Elmo, and Play Station 2, Wii were inflated when the demand was high and the availability is low.
- In the Scientific American Frontiers video Fat and Happy, children are more likely to binge on junk food when they are provided the opportunity if they are restricted at home.
- A person who sells a used car, stereo, refrigerator, etc. can make the item appear “scarce” by scheduling people to view the item at the same time.

- How does understanding the scarcity principle help you understand why it is difficult to save endangered species such as elephants, walruses, leopards, etc.



- James Burke, the author of Connections series, says that the production line has had the benefit of making more products available to more people, thus driving down the cost.
 - According to the scarcity principle, what are the psychological consequences of the production line (making more things available)—How does it affect our sense of identity and individuality?

Student examples of Scarcity

I have a friend who finds he only wants to date women that are already married or have a serious boyfriend. It is like he becomes obsessed with trying to go out with them. Every once and a while a woman will break up with her boyfriend and start to date him, but then he finds them unappealing; there is no longer a challenge for him. They become too convenient.

My wife and I went to Sears to look at washing machines. There was one on sale for \$199.00 (the cheapest in the store). This washer did not have the features we wanted, but it was at a good price. My wife thought we should get it now because it was on special.

There was recently a report about the dangers of porn and sexual issues on the internet. People wanted to limit access and possibly apply indecency laws to some of the groups that deal exclusively with pornography content. As soon as that huge report came out, the groups that have mostly sexual content saw a HUGE increase in use and people became more interested in having what they felt was going to become scarce.

When I lived in Minot, ND, a ban was put on Stephen King books. Soon after, Stephen King books went up in sales and popularity increased.

Appeal to Emotions (fear)

The appeal to fear is a persuasion strategy to motivate people to engage from a particular behavior by scaring them, rather than informing them.

Sometimes the appeal to fear is based on legitimate concerns such as:

- smoking causes cancers,
- "unsafe sex" increases one's chance of getting AIDS,
- not wearing your seatbelt increases your chance of get hurt in an accident, or
- drinking while driving can increase the chance you will get in an accident).

Appeal to the emotions (fear)

In 1932, Adolf Hitler inspired his fellow countrymen with the words:

The streets of our country are in turmoil. The universities are filling with students rebelling and rioting. Communists are seeking to destroy our country. Russia is threatening us with her might, and the Republic is in danger. Yes--danger from within and without. We need law and order! Without it our nation cannot survive.

Herman Goering, founder of the Gestapo, president of the Reichstag, convicted war criminal

“It is the leaders of a country who determine the policy. It is always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship, a parliament or communist dictatorship, voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders...

All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for a lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.”

Other contemporary examples:

- Corporations say that regulations will hurt the economy, lose jobs, etc.
- Regulating drug prices will hurt R&D.
- Strict new FDA regulations to address BSE (mad cow disease) would bring little real benefit and cause great economic harm
- Enacting this law will restrict your rights.
- Listen to the ads for/against measures during election time. Rarely will they address the issue, but appeal to your emotions.
- (the President), by not being able to hire/fire anyone he chooses will hurt national security. (but what about individual biases and beliefs)
- Gay marriages will destroy the “institution of marriage”.
- There are communists in the state department
- There are terrorists in this country
- Scientists are censoring my theories (that the earth is flat)
- The American military knew that Pearl Harbor was going to be attacked by the Japanese in 1941 and are censoring my theory.
- Governor (former) Ann Richards is appointing gays and lesbians to state positions
- “Liberals” will ban the Bible if John Kerry is elected.

Sometimes the fear appeal is based on irrational fears such as those based on racial or ethnic prejudice in Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, the junta in Argentina, or Hussein's Iraq just to name a few.

Distinguishing the difference between the legitimate and illegitimate uses of the appeal to fear is difficult because:

- Most of us don't realize when we are making decisions based on emotion, and not basing a decision on a rational process.
- Fear redirects our thinking away from rational processes in assessing the claim and the evidence for the claim (which are rarely provided).
- Appealing to fear is powerful because it directs our thoughts away from careful considerations of the issue at hand and towards a plan of ridding ourselves of that fear, rather than assessing the evidence for or against the issue.

When conditions make the appeal to fear more effective?

The fear appeal is most effective when

- (1) It scares the hell out of people
- (2) It offers a specific recommendation for overcoming the fear arousing threat.
- (3) The recommended action is perceived as effective for reducing the threat.
- (4) The recipient of the message believes that he or she can perform the recommended action.

Certain tetanus shot programs and anti-smoking campaigns that incorporate all four of these brought better results than programs that only used some of these. Certain threats such as campaigns to "just say no" to drugs or nuclear disarmament are not effective because the listener does not perceive that their behavior is effective or doable.