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WORLDWIDE

THE 5 SECRETS TO EFFORTLESS PERSUASION

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Persuasion is one of the most important tools in a real estate professional's toolbox. Persuasion can be defined as "the art of getting someone to do something that he or she wouldn't do if you didn't ask." If you've influenced someone's thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, opinions, or actions, you've managed to persuade them, whether you were trying to or not.

According to the Harvard Business Review, "persuasion is the language of business." So much persuasion is required in order to get the job done, in any business, but especially in a real estate setting. You have to persuade a quality brokerage to take a chance on you as an agent,

persuade your team to let you take a crack at a certain listing, persuade the owner to allow you to list the property. You then have to persuade a buyer that a home is a good fit for them. It can be absolutely exhausting, especially for agents who don't understand how persuasion works.

I've learned how to make persuasion effortless, and I'd love to share with you my five secrets to effortless persuasion:

1. **Find a Common Ground with the Client** - Learn about your potential client and what their needs are. You should spend some time researching a potential client before you meet with them so you know if you share any common ground. You may have similar hobbies, lifestyles, or have an interest in the same travel destinations or foods. Use this to your advantage because people place more trust in people who remind them of themselves, and who have a similar belief system. It will also make your job easier in the long run to find commonalities before you start working with them.

It's extremely important that you make your client comfortable because they won't make any decisions if they don't. If you don't know how to determine whether you are making someone comfortable or not, you can practice by watching their body language and eye engagement. If they act like they want to escape, they probably do. If they begin to ask questions, that can also be an indication they like you. When people like you, they want to know more. If not, then run. It's also important, when keeping the peace, that you keep any religious, political, or otherwise polarizing beliefs to yourself when you are meeting with clients or potential clients.

2. **Build Credibility** – In order to really build credibility, you first have to earn trust. Cultivating credibility takes time and consistency. The three T's in building credibility are: 1. Build Trust, 2. Earn Trust, and finally 3. Get Trust. Avoid doing anything that is questionable. For example, if you are attempting to get in with a homeowner to list their home, don't tell them you have a buyer if it isn't true. Even if it is true, isn't your goal to be hired in a fiduciary capacity to protect the Seller? A listing agent's responsibility is to get exposure for the Seller, to represent their best interest, and to make the property location, condition, and price right to attract agents so they bring their buyers. Competency is highly important to build credibility. As a real estate professional, you are expected to be a competent resource. Know your craft. Should a buyer or seller know that market inventory, or should you? Of course, you should. When you show homes, it shouldn't be the first time you see them with your client, but instead, one of the selections you have chosen to show them based on your findings of what they want. Consistency is another key ingredient to building credibility. Everyone wants to hang with someone that they can count on. Consistency is showcased in those individuals that have learned that patience and a steady hand lead to trust. Clients or prospective clients will be attracted to you because you have built trust one step at a time. Loyalty comes from consistent trust building. Well placed testimonials can be very helpful in positioning your quality in a subtle

manner. Posting reviews from other clients allows people to read real feedback from real people that will help grow your reputation which leads to earned trust. If you have authored any blogs, or even better, any eBooks, you'll want to share these as well. Anything that establishes you as an authority is good in this field. If you are in the Real Estate business, then you should be standing out as a resource. You'll also want to make sure that your social media is credible and recently updated, with quality content and not just filler content or funny posts. Your pictures should be of high quality without any fuzziness or distortion. You'll also want to make sure your personal pages are pristine as well, without mention of any provocative topics. Friends associated with your social media should also be cleared to preserve your reputation.

Reputation is everything! Be consistent with what you say and do – and remember this saying...Do what you say and say what you do. If you do not follow through, you lose all credibility, and potentially any faith that the client has in you. Once a reputation is lost, it is lost forever!

4. Listen – Listening is an observation skill, and knowing that will help their powers of persuasion develop beyond the initial meeting to discover client personality types, wants, needs, etc. Listening is also essential during showings to confirm and adjust priorities captured during the initial conversations...clients have an idea of what they want and the order of priority for those items before they start looking at homes, but those items that are truly important will be revealed during those conversations among clients and in their reactions/body language as they evaluate the homes and narrow the list of potentials.

Listen to what your client has to say and allow them to do most of the talking. You've built your credibility as stated in the last tip, and you've let your website, social media, accreditations, and accolades speak for themselves. The potential client obviously has faith in your ability, or they wouldn't have agreed to a meeting with you in the first place. This is the time to listen to them and really understand what they're looking for. Make sure you have at least one meeting face-to-face, because this is crucial to making sure everyone is understood correctly and to establish a lasting bond. This will also help you understand the client's personality type. Are they analytical or emotional? This will allow you to determine whether they make their decisions based on facts (what neighborhood is cheapest, what are the costs going to be, what is the crime rate, is the school system top rated), or if they make their decisions based on emotions (is there a large backyard for my children to play in, are the colors pleasing, do I feel at home here). The emotional thinker makes impulsive decisions based on gut reactions that make them feel something, while the former analytical thinker will require many hours, and possibly even days, to consider all of the facts carefully.

3. Communicate Effectively -- By communicating effectively, you have put yourself on an equal ground, listened intensely to the other party, and let them speak without interruption. No matter what happens, you are absolutely not going to argue or use the "I" word so they chase you out of the room. Getting the last word in or being right isn't

important when you are trying to be persuasive. You will respond and never react. Remember, the customer is always right. Now we all know they are not but making them feel terrible about it isn't the way to earn any deals. It's better to let them trust you and then evolve. That is what good communication does. It brings you together with others because they trust and respect you. Key communication is making sure they know you have heard them and understand, even if you don't agree.

You should always be the initiator of a communication. Call your clients first. Establish a time each week to update them and consistently stick to it. Remember this, in sales, a prima donna gets called and a professional makes the call.

Agents need to become skilled in small talk because meeting strangers/potential clients for the first time can be awkward, and if not handled properly will work against them. One method that is easy to master that will help with small talk is the FORD method. FORD stands for Family Occupation Recreation Dreams. Having a couple questions handy for each subject will make starting conversations easier, and make it easier to find a common ground.

If you feel you need to work on your communication skills, then you could consider both speaker training and active listening skill training. Toastmasters and corporate listening training sources can be found on the internet. Everyone can learn these skills, but you have to practice to make yourself improve and get noticed.

Additionally, you should recognize that real estate can be a complex topic for most people and can be confusing to people who aren't familiar with it. Be an educator. Be patient. You should want them to have the facts instead of believing whatever the neighbor is saying or their van pool buddies. They are often without the facts and it's our job to communicate accurate information to them.

4. **Be Authentic** - When you are a phony baloney, you are not authentic. Clients can tell right away when you're not the real deal and it's the easiest way to kill any trust or faith that they have in you. There was a colleague in my office many years ago who was a brand-new agent and hadn't listed a single home yet. Rather than be transparent about that and find a client who was willing to take a chance on him, he would lie and brag about all of these deals he had --- it was obviously not true which caused him to be untrusted. No one will hire you if they are unable to trust you. One slip up is everlasting. Know your values. Be proud of who you are and be that person. People need to fit your culture not the other way around. You can't fake it for long, so don't start. There is nothing wrong with being human and opening up to others. In fact, people typically want to help and love feeling needed. In addition, those that are their own authentic selves tend to have quite a following of people. Everyone loves the real deal and it is reflected in the following they get. So, let them in. If you really want someone to trust you, be the real authentic you. Finding people, you connect with makes it much easier to be authentic. There is plenty

of business, and more enjoyable business, when you work with people you connect with as the real you. By doing so, your stage performance days are over, you will more easily grow your business, and you will be much happier.

Remember, Ethics and integrity play a very strong role on this topic. The keys to persuasion are never about making someone do something they don't want to do, buying something they don't want to buy, or otherwise changing their minds from what it is that they really want or need. Persuasion is simply about learning how to have the appropriate skill set that will assist potential clients in seeing you as the clear candidate for them.

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To Effortless Persuasion,

Cindy