

# **The Six Principles of High Consequence Decisions**

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Complex, high ticket sales demand a better understanding of the buying process than typical low ticket sales. Rather than steps to follow, advanced sellers need to know the driving principles of human psychology and how to use them. Here is a list the six principles that drive high consequence decisions followed by the action steps you can take to use them.

## **Six Key Principles**

Most of what you have learned about selling and everything that you will learn in this program is based upon one or more of the following basic principles of human psychology. Learning these principles and how to apply them will allow you to be more precise and consistent with your current skills and more creative in your ability to develop solutions for tougher sales challenges. Here are the six primary principles that affect an individual making a high-consequence decision.

### **The Principle of Sensory Dependence**

The mind and the body are so tightly connected that we cannot change one without changing the other. Everything we know, we perceived through our sense of sight, touch, hearing, taste, smell or words that represent some sensory-based experience.

### **The Principle of Two-Mindedness**

The mind is composed of two major hemispheres that handle information in distinctly different ways and process the information through a central zone. This “bicameral mind” results in a split between the logical and emotional minds.

### **The Principle of Anxiety-Driven Performance**

Without anxiety regarding our outcome, we tend to perform poorly. As our anxiety level increases our performance increases, to a point. After that, our performance decreases until we revert to a state of inactivity.

### **The Principle of Rationalized Behavior**

Most rational thinking takes place after the fact and is biased toward justifying the decision, commitment or action that has already occurred.

### **The Principle of Limited Conscious Attention**

Although we have a vast subliminal awareness, humans have the ability to maintain a conscious awareness of only seven, plus or minus two, elements at a time.

### **The Principle of Validation Shortcuts**

We often decide on the validity of a claim or request based upon previously decided patterns rather than considering each claim or request solely on its own merits.

## **Sensory Dependence**

Everything you know about the world you learned through your senses. You either saw it, heard it, felt it, tasted it or smelled it, or it didn't happen to you. If you hallucinate, you have to hallucinate in your senses. You have no other way of knowing what is going on. You only know of the existence of things like gamma rays because there are instruments, like the Geiger counter, that will record their presence and convert the

record to data that you can perceive via your senses.

As you were taught in elementary school, there are only five senses; sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. However, about 60,000 years ago, human beings created with another means of conveying information: attaching a meaning to certain sounds to create words. Humans communicate ideas through words and, in fact, this is how they think. Don't you "think" by talking to yourself in words? It is the words that express the content of the message, the process level of communication is everything but the words.

Smell and taste play a limited role in most sales. You don't want to smell bad, but other than that there is very little that most salespeople can do to make use of smell or taste. Automotive salespeople might use the "new car smell" to their advantage by pointing it out to the buyer and recalling it to stimulate emotion. Although, for the most part, there are only four "channels" of communication for selling or, four ways to influence buyers: through what they see, what they hear, what they feel (the process) and what they think (the content).

**Implementation Strategy:** To use the principle of sensory dependence keep your sales process multisensory. Make sure they are getting pictures, sounds and sensations as well as thoughts. Don't try to sit them in your office and sell them with words. Take them out to the docks as soon as it makes sense. Show them what you mean and let them get a feel for what you are trying to say.

Photos and even the photo album itself can be used to say a lot about you and your company.

Show your boats! Don't get lazy and try to shortcut this process. It is critical to building emotion which is the only antidote to "I want to think about it."

## **Bilateral Brain**

For people to act happily and decisively on a purchase that will affect their lifestyle for a long time, they must be brought to a state that can most succinctly be described as "bilateral congruence." To explain further, recall that humans generally have two minds, connected to each other by a "neural highway," the corpus callosum. Although the two halves appear to be identical, thus the term bilateral, the two minds operate in distinctly different ways to sustain and enhance the individual's enjoyment of life, whatever that may be.

The two minds are known among neuroscientists as the digital hemisphere and the analog hemisphere based upon the method of thought used by that hemisphere. The digital hemisphere, also called the logical mind, analyses information for validity, it does this with a form of binary logic that categorizes objects in terms of what they are and are not. It validates claims by supposing the opposite of the information at hand, if the supposition fails, the information is accepted. If the supposition succeeds, the information is rejected.

This is very different than the analog, or emotional mind. This side of the brain responds to information with regards to likes and dislikes. It is like a child in a candy store, wanting what it wants, when it wants it, without regard to consequence. It is purely reactive to emotional stimuli.

Although they share the goal of pleasurable survival, the two minds have individual goals as well. In a nutshell; logic protects while emotion satisfies. Most people believe in the value of logical thought to anticipate and resolve potential problems. Thus, they rely upon their logic for self-protection. They have found that following their impulses can have negative long-term consequences. Emotions, however, are the basis for our feelings of pleasure and satisfaction and we allow our emotional minds to direct how we pursue them.

**Implementation Strategy:** Use high impact statements that stress the emotional payoff over the factual evidence. A useful metaphor for understanding this idea is the typical television game show. Onstage a gregarious, outgoing host, representing the buyer's emotional mind, maintains the excitement and sparkle of the show. Offstage the unseen judge or referee, which represents the buyer's logical mind, validates the contestant's (salesperson's) responses.

In selling to the emotions, this is the situation you want to maintain. Keep the emotional mind onstage, eagerly anticipating the enjoyment the buyer will experience from owning the product. Keep the logical mind offstage simply verifying your ability to deliver the stated benefit. The goal is to keep the judge silent so that you do not have to deal with the logical mind's propensity for delaying action while it contemplates details.

There is a specific sequence you can use to create this situation between the logical and emotional minds. Recalling the difference between features and benefits, features support benefits by giving a product certain qualities. Benefits increase the enjoyment of life in some way that must be experienced by the emotions. Therefore, features support benefits that create emotions.

Use this knowledge when you structure your message to your buyer. You can bring the emotional mind to the forefront first by opening with the promise of an emotion which you support with a benefit that would logically accrue from a feature. Emotion-Benefit-Feature, try it yourself.

*"You'll love this ship, you will really see the quality because this brand is the choice of deep water cruisers worldwide."*

vs.

*"Because this brand is the choice of deep water cruisers worldwide, you'll see the quality and love this ship."*

Which has the greatest impact on you? Most people will say the first sentence. That is because by promising an emotion first, you are making this an issue to be dealt with in the realm of emotion. Since it is important, the logical mind is involved but relegated to a secondary role, simply validating your claims rather than evaluating them.

Prepare yourself to acquire this linguistic habit by making a list of your product's features. Beside that list make a list of the benefits those features support and next to that, list the emotions that are enjoyed when a person experiences the benefit, as in the following example.

## **Anxiety-Driven Performance**

Anxiety increases performance until the optimum level is achieved whereupon performance decreases. In the beginning, without anxiety, performance is poor. This is caused by the psychological state of entitlement, when the individual feels they deserve whatever they are getting and no effort on their part is required. At the other extreme is that state where the individual is so frustrated in their efforts that they curl up into a ball and refuse to do anything, this is known as catatonia.

These states have a significant effect on high consequence decisions. Too little anxiety and the buyer remains in a continual state of “window shopping” never becoming concerned because there is no fear of commitment. Too much anxiety and the buyer freezes up and postpones the decision forever. Any attempt to encourage action from a person in this state is perceived as pressure and will result in a serious and potentially unrecoverable loss of trust.

Anxiety is also a factor in the sellers performance. Too little and the presentation becomes drab and blasé, the seller must have enough excitement (good anxiety) to project and create enthusiasm. Too much anxiety and the seller will either freeze up or create a state of alarm in the buyer. The seller must have the right amount of anxiety just like the buyer.

**Implementation Strategy:** Remember to have something new for your client at each of the five sales points. Always have new information or ideas and don't give away all of your good news too early. Save something to use to re-excite them at the next step. Reserving the excitement of good news may allow you to use that excitement at a later time to advance the sale. For example, telling the buyer that the appraisal was higher than expected over the phone then asking them to come in to approve more paperwork may not be the best plan.

If you get them to come in, give them the good news about the appraisal and then ask for their approval on paperwork, things are much more likely to go smoothly. Why? Because the emotional excitement of good news make people much more eager to act.

## **Rationalized Behavior**

It is a common misconception that people think first and act on their decision. Although this is the preferred method of action, we actually invest more time in rationally explaining our behavior after the fact than before. This is the ego performing its primary function of protecting the psyche. As Dale Carnegie pointed out in his landmark work on self-development *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, even a murderer, on his way to the gas chamber, rationalizes why the victim “needed killing.”

This fundamental fact of human behavior affects the buyer's future satisfaction to a great extent. People who spend a long time shopping and comparing often become dissatisfied without real cause. In their shopping process they have “talked themselves out of” many acceptable options, some of which they may have to live with.

It is the responsibility of the professional salesperson to carefully control the sales process with the goal of timing the client's decision such that they avoid any periods when the client begins to defend the act of *not buying*.

**Implementation Strategy:** To utilize the principle of rationalized behavior, plan your sales goals for each of the five sales in advance. Make certain that at each stage of the process they are moving forward, without being left in a position to rationalize their inaction.

For instance, if you've found the right boat, shown it to them but cannot get them to commit to an offer, they are likely to try to "talk themselves out of it." Before you let that happen, remember two things:

1) This should not be happening. Either you missed some sign that this was not the right boat for them or you failed to prepare adequately to build an emotionally compelling presentation. Either way, don't make this mistake again (you will of course, but try not to.)

2) You must now add some unresolved thing to "be researched" that will keep them from solidifying their position, mentally. Set a time to get back together with the answers and hope that, with adequate preparation, you can rekindle their desire.

Note: Deliberate use of the next two patterns will require special study and training.

### **Limited Conscious Attention**

A person can maintain an awareness of seven, plus or minus two, conscious units of attention at a time. What happens to everything occurring around us besides the five to nine things that we can notice? They still happen, our body still registers on their occurrence, but the mind is unable to process the event in terms of meaning or significance.

Information received this way tends to be accepted uncritically, as fact or nature. As in the case of a wily teenager catching an unwary parent off guard with a series of nuisance questions followed by a slyly worded request that would usually be denied. With luck and timing, the teen will gain unintended permission beyond normal bounds.

This principle of human behavior is the underlying element behind hypnosis. Hypnotic states are evoked when all available conscious units are tied up and the subconscious is directly engaged.

**Implementation Strategy:** The first way to use this principle is to not allow your buyers to become overloaded with input unless you mean for them to. To prevent overload and its consequent distractions, organize your information flow so that your conclusions are easily understood and agreed upon.

Don't make your buyers accept you on faith, use your in-depth understanding of yachts and yachters(?) to make your message clear simple and logical. If you are interested in learning to deliberately use hypnotic patterns, study the work of Drs. John Grinder and Milton Erickson.. They have made a study of how people, commonly called "silver-tongued devils," use their skill to "sell ice to eskimos."

Their work discusses patterns such as embedded presuppositions, commands and questions along with an acutely trained eye to watch for responses to subtle nuances of language and description. Through conscious training you can develop the ability to use these patterns to keep most people at any level of consciousness that you want in order to accomplish your communications objective.

## Validation Shortcuts

Humans, animals, and insects all use patterns of automatic influence, or “validation shortcuts,” to get what they want. Researchers have identified eight of these patterns that tend to cause people to comply with a request, regardless of the content of the request.

The fact that, “four out of five dentists recommend...” is a powerful advertising statement because it invokes two patterns, “consensus” and “authority” making it easy to choose that product without fear of regret. Understanding and using these patterns will make you and your claims more credible and compelling.

**Implementation Strategy:** To utilize the principle of validation shortcuts, learn the eight patterns, then collect and practice using “facts,” based upon these patterns, that reinforce your claims. For instance, to invoke the principle of “authority” do you have any celebrity customers that would lend credibility to your company? Although it makes no sense, the fact that local celebrity bought his yacht from you will be influential to many people whether they admit it or not. In a more elite context, name dropping may be a turn-off, but the fact that you do business with the upper crust is a powerful tool even to the upper crust.

Do you or your product have market dominance in any area over your competition? If so, you have the powerful pattern of “consensus” working for you. Use it by frequently citing those areas where you can say “most people go with us on this.”

As they say, “knowledge is power” and the ability to predict the steps of a process will put you a long way toward controlling its outcome. Use the knowledge of your experience and what you read to make the buying process smooth and comfortable for your clients. You will manage with more control and create happier customers.