

INTERNATIONAL
FUNDRAISING
CONFERENCE

BOSTON, MA
MARCH 20 - 22, 2016

The Art
and Science
of Fundraising
Persuasion





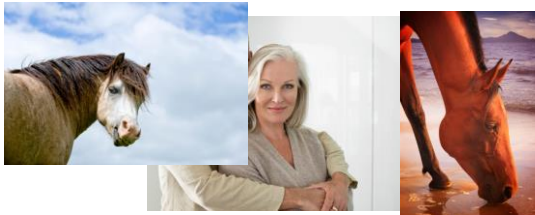
Anne T. Melvin
Director of Training and Education, Harvard University
March 2016



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Getting to Yes

You have to get the prospect to say 'yes'
to your charity and the idea of a gift



Social Science – Science vs. Art





Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive – Robert B. Cialdini

The Art and Science of Fundraising Persuasion

Liking – We say 'yes' to people we like. The more we like them, the more we want to say 'yes.'

Social Proof – We look to what others do to guide our behavior

Reciprocity – We feel obligated to return favors performed for us

Commitment and Consistency – We want to act consistently with our stated commitments and values

Authority – We look for experts to show us the way

Scarcity – The less available the resource, the more we want it.



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What do you want from this talk?



The Art and Science of Fundraising Persuasion

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Liking - social science experiment

Repeat the diner's order back to them EXACTLY as they said it

70%
increase in tip



Whuh....??



Matching
creates
feelings of
liking

Matching
strengthens
the bonds
between
people

Liking – social science experiment

“Mirroring” –
Negotiation
experiment with MBA
students



12.5%



67%



Mirroring – the art



Mirroring – “Just the facts, ma’am”



- BULLET....
- POINT....
- STYLE.....

Mirroring - indirect

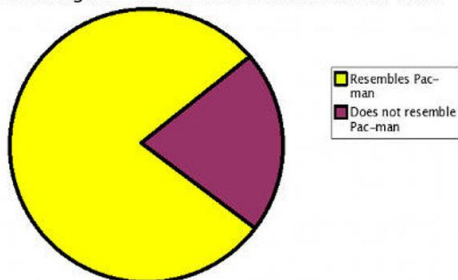
- Ahhhhhh.....



Mirroring – the art Words and phrases



Percentage of Chart Which Resembles Pac-man



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Americans are.....



How can ‘social proof’ be true?

Humans are surprisingly poor at understanding the factors that affect our own behavior.



Social proof

Infomercials

"Operators are
waiting – please call
now"



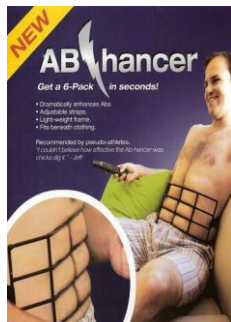
Social proof

Infomercials

"If operators are
busy – please
call back later"



Social proof







Social proof – social [science](#) experiment



Arizona
Petrified
Forest
National
Park



Social proof – social science experiment



Existing signs

"Your heritage is being vandalized every day by theft losses of petrified wood of 14 tons a year mostly of small pieces at a time."

NEGATIVE SOCIAL PROOF

Social proof – social science experiment



NEGATIVE SOCIAL PROOF SIGN:

"Many park visitors have removed the petrified wood from the park changing the natural state of the Petrified Forest."

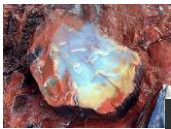
Social proof – social science experiment



NEUTRAL SIGN:

"Please don't remove the petrified wood from the park, in order to preserve the natural state of the Petrified Forest."

Social proof – social science experiment



BAIT

Social proof – social science experiment

Neutral
social proof signs
(don't remove...)

1.67% wood taken

Negative
social proof signs
(visitors have removed...)

7.92% of wood taken



What **should** the message be?

“98% of visitors leave this park in its natural state by taking only pictures, leaving only footprints.”

Who drives to work on the highway?



Social Proof

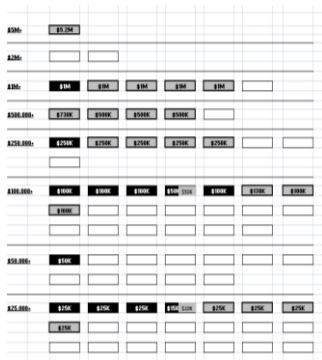


Social proof – the **art** of testimonials



Close as possible to audience you're trying to reach

Social proof – the **art** of the box chart



Social proof – the **art** of the ask



Social proof – the **art** of the bequest ask

"Mrs. Hu, thank you for your generous gifts over the years. You've been such a loyal and tremendous supporter of our organization. You know, many donors who give as regularly as you have put our organization in their will; what are your thoughts about doing that?"

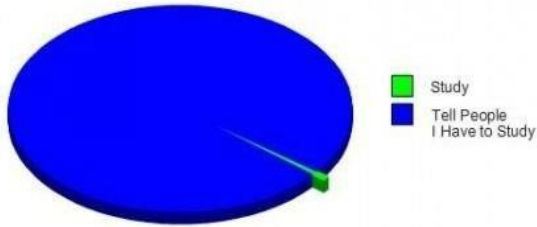


AVOID **Negative** Social Proof



*"Only **8%** of classical music listeners give to WCMU radio station.... Please give...."*

Things I Do When I Have to Study



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Reciprocity: social science experiment



Check with ONE candy Check with TWO candies

Reciprocity: social **science** experiment



Check with ONE candy Check with TWO candies
3.3% raise in tip 14.1% raise in tip

Reciprocity: social **science** experiment



23%

Reciprocity: pump up the volume

- 1. Significance *(two is better than one)*
- 2. Unexpected *(candy after turning away)*
- 3. Personalized *(‘I’m giving you this second candy because you were a really nice customer’)*

Reciprocity



Reciprocity – the art



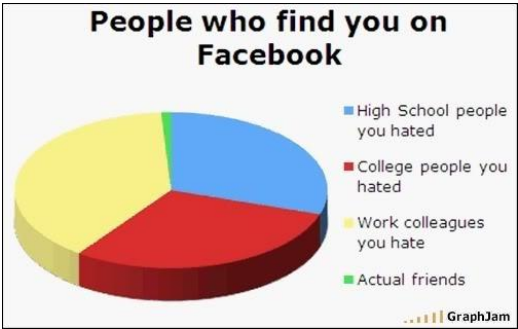
Reciprocity – the art

Small,
personalized
gifts



Final advice on reciprocity!





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Commitment and consistency – social science experiment

Control Group:

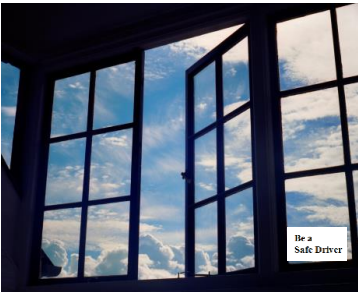
17% said "Yes"



Commitment and consistency – social science experiment

Experimental Group:

Most said "Yes"



Commitment and consistency – social science experiment

Experimental group:
2 weeks later

76%
said "Yes"



Commitment and Consistency



Commitment and consistency – the **art**

Written pledges

"Can you please respond to this email with a 'yes' that it's your intention to make the \$500 gift we discussed?"



Commitment and consistency – the **art**

- Advisory groups – written report



- Volunteers – talk about your org to a friend



Commitment and consistency – the **art**

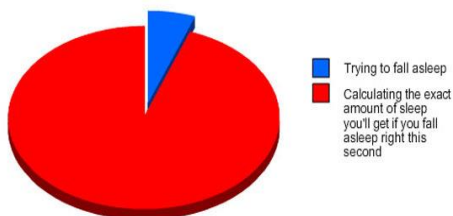


Ask volunteers to write a fundraising letter to their friends and follow up with phone calls

Ask a low-level supporter with potential to host a dinner party/cocktail party



Time spent when you can't sleep



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Authority – social science experiment



Control group:

Casually dressed
young man

Experimental group:

Same man in a
business suit

Authority – the art

Would you
invest \$100,000
in the
organization this
person
represents?



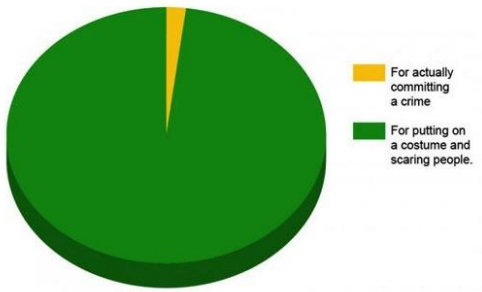
Authority – When it comes to TRUST and BELIEVABILITY



- **55%**—How you appear to the other person
- **38%**—What you sound like
- **7%**—What you say



Why villains in Scooby Doo are arrested



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Scarcity – social science



1988

Tired old Olds...



- 2003 – after years of flagging Oldsmobile sales
- Fewer Olds ads
- No retooling

Scarcity



**BEST SELLING
CAR OF THE
YEAR - 2003**

Oldsmobile announced they were going out of business.

The Day the Twinkie Died
Nov 16, 2012



Scarcity



Scarcity – the **art** – Jeopardy style!



Answer:

Harvard announced the price of scholarships was doubling and the old price was only good for two more months.



Question:

How did Harvard College raise 148 new scholarships in two months?

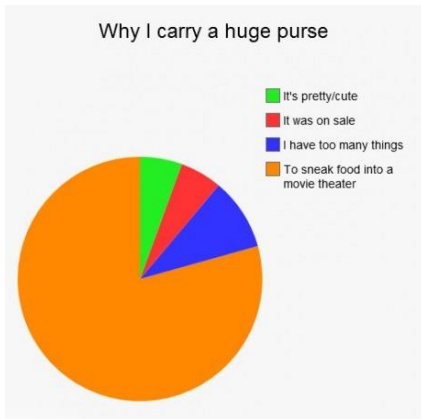
Scarcity – the **art** Same message, different emphasis

"John, if you make a gift of \$100,000, you will qualify for the scholarship matching challenge, making a total campaign gift of \$200,000."



"John, only 20% of the challenge match funds are left. Several other donors are thinking about using the match. If they do, I can't guarantee there will be any match left for you. Will you make a gift of \$100,000 now to qualify for the match?"





Questions?



Café Circles

Liking Social Proof Commitment and Consistency Scarcity
 Reciprocity Authority



STAND UP!

Pick the technique YOU learned here today that YOU think would be most persuasive with a donor.

Tell your colleague about it in **30 seconds or less**. I'll time you.

Then listen to your colleagues favorite technique. **30 seconds or less**.

Switch partners! Repeat!

QUESTIONS??



Bonus Tracks



Perceptual Contrast

Things look different, depending on how they are presented to you.



Perceptual Contrast



Rienzi and the
CRUT



Making perceptual contrast work FOR you



- Present not-so-good choice first
- Present best choice next and last
- Don't present too many choices



Fluency

- A message that is difficult to decode, pronounce, understand, is less CONVINCING than one that is easy.
- Ex: "If the glove don't fit, you must acquit!"



Fluency:
Use a rhyme and your gifts will climb



“Help this pup to grow up!”

[illegible]

Disfluency



Fear Motivates

“The only thing we have to fear is...fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which **paralyzes** needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”



Hilliard, Ohio school bond levy

“Unite for Kids”

“Building Tomorrow Today”



“Our Kids Can’t Wait” –
fear/loss aversion



Commitment and consistency – the **art** of the ask



What I'm hearing from you, Tze, is that it's important that we're able to keep attracting the best students, even if they, like you, have a father who wasn't there for most of their childhood, and that it's important that Harvard is able to provide a full ride for students, like you had. Is that correct? That's Harvard's goal too. I'd like for you to consider making that possible for the next generation of students with a gift of \$250,000."

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