

# Sell Like the Bears

Contributed by Harlan Goerger

If a toy store can make millions by utilizing the Laws of Persuasion, what could you do?  
How a Toy Business Uses Every Persuasion Law

A family trip over Labor Day takes us to the Mall of America to entertain the kids with rides.

Yep, long lines, hurry up and wait so the kids can have a 2 minute thrill ride. It's great to see their smiles and enthusiasm after they get off as compared to their trepidation as they watch other fly around the coasters prior to their ride.

It's later afternoon and parents and granddad are whipped, a nap sounds great! But wait, one child suggest something and there is a choir of yes, yes!!

As we enter the source of this enthusiasm there is a huge line and my feet hurt, but this is not under my control. As I wait and watch the realization of what this operation had going was amazing. Virtually every law of influence and persuasion was being executed with precision right before my eyes. I thought, "If only half of the business's and salespeople out there could implement half of what these people are doing, their sales would skyrocket! Here is what I observed..

If you have ever been to Build A Bear you will have experienced all 10 Laws of Persuasion in action. I'm not going to go into all 10, rather here are some key observations that you and I can implement.

1. Emotional Engagement: The people at Build A Bear know a parent or grandparent have a tough time saying "no" to the kids and a stuffed toy. The emotional engagement of the child is such that they will persist and use every influence tool they know or can invent to participate in the event of building their own toy.

The initial emotional aspect does not stop once your in the story though. Through out the process of picking the bear, stuffing them, adding the heat, the voice, the accessories and registering them is a complete emotional experience for the child. (Many of the parents too)

This is far more than a stuffed toy, this is a "buddy"; the child has built, named and dressed!

Question: Are you or how can you "emotionally engage" your clients into such an emotional excitement that they pull all the stops to "sell" everyone on the experience you provide? How can you emotionally engage your clients and prospects in the event called "sales"?

What is it you can provide, do or eliminate for your clients that will give them an emotional charge and cause them to remember you differently than anyone else?

2. Fully Engaging the Customer: Here is where many salespeople, managers and others fall short. The customer was fully engaged from A-Z of the operation. First they have to pick the animal from a variety of animals, then wait in line to help stuff it. The attendant held the animal on the machine and filled it, but the child stepped on the pedal to activate the stuffer. The child also determined how soft or full the animal became. Now for the neat part, the child picks out a red or pink heart, can upgrade to a ticking heart (added cost of course), but either way they went through a routine of "activating" the heart including kissing it before it went into the animal. All of this while a line of people waiting their turn looked on.

You want more engagement! Now they get to brush it and wash (vacuum) the fur before they dress it. There are dressing tables, mirrors and as many outfits to select from as you can think of. Visualize 20 kids dressing their own pet bears at one time.

Question: In what ways do you or could you fully engage your clients in active involvement? Not just in using or applying your product, but prior to them even buying it? If you sell a machine, do you run it or do they push the buttons? How can you help them "experience" the product prior to them buying it? How much of a difference could this make for them in moving on a decision? How about all the decision makers for influences, can you get them involved immediately in some type of action?

3. The Law of Conformity: If every kid is doing it, then every parent has to do it too. Imagine saying no to a child when everyone around them is getting to stuff their own toy. Also imagine not buying clothes for it when everyone else is! The law of conformity draws people in. Big windows so those not in the store can see the line, the kids, the stuffing machines and line up of stuffed and dressed animals.

"Why can't I if they get to?" goes the question to the parent. Big sad eyes melt hearts and an hour later out goes another \$20 bear with \$80 of accessories attached. Yes people tend to follow what others are doing. Some 80% of our public falls into the "conformist" category and tend to follow the current trends.

Question: How could the Law of Conformity work for you, your client and company? How can you demonstrate that others are doing or using your product and having the outcomes that they want? How can you determine how to find others similar to your current clients and gather them into your follower group?

4. The Law of Contrast: When opposites are drawn closer together the more obvious the difference becomes. This was in acted right from the start. The variety of animals available created a huge contrast and caused individuality for those that wanted it. Also, once the bear was picked up the cost of additional items such as a "ticking heart" or a "voice box" (the child recorded this) for \$5 was nothing compared to the bear and clothes. Add in the emotional and ownership aspect already created, it's a none issue to add them.

Question: How are you providing contrast in your influence efforts? Are you obtaining the main decision and then providing addition smaller add on items or services that seem minimal in comparison?

5. The Follow-up: Along the wall is a line of computers and keyboards for parents and child to sit at and register their new friend. Full information on the new friends name, date of birth, their owners name, address, parents information are all put in before the new bear is even paid for.

There is a newsletter and updates on new items for the new friend and a continued flow of ideas for the child, parent and new bear. They are engaged long after the initial sale.

Question: How do you capture the information so you can continue the engagement, add more value and keep your customer thinking of you long after the initial sale? What do you have in place? What could you have in place?

6. The Guarantee: Now you have just created your best new friend; what if something happens to him and they get lost? Well, if he shows up at a Build A Bear store, they can track him by a built in code and find out who he belongs to! Yep, they will reconnect lost friends with their new owners at no charge.

Now chances of that happening are fairly slim, yet what comfort it gives a child and parent that is plunking down \$80-\$100 for a new friend.

Question: What are you providing your customers that gives them ease of mind? What lets them know you will be there when needed? What makes them feel good about their new purchase?

There are 6 points out of many that I observed happening to each and every customer in the store. If you can honestly say you are blowing the doors off your customers in each of these areas, you must be going to the bank with an armored truck! If not, gather the troops and put your heads together on each point, come up with ideas and then implement them. They will make a difference for you and your customers!

To your success, it's your choice!

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