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## How to Become a Persuasive Triple-Threat

Prospective clients will be eager to buy your ideas if you exhibit these qualities

[Merge Gupta-Sunderji](#) || May 20, 2015



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**W**hat makes one person more persuasive than another? In the course of your professional life, you've probably met people who are masterful at bringing others around to their point of view. You've also likely made contact with others who couldn't give away free water to a thirsty man. So why are certain people seen as more credible and trustworthy than others?

In the world of the performing arts, someone who can sing, dance and act is referred to as a "triple threat." Each of these skills separately is a talent, but when a single person has all three abilities, they become formidable. In much the same way, when a single person has the triple threat of persuasiveness—expertise (or perceived authority), honesty, and likeability—others are much more willing to yield and concede to their point of view.

Research shows that people are prepared to bypass the tedious process of informed decision making, and are much more susceptible to messages and requests if someone has these three character attributes. Let's look at each of the three individually.

### EXPERTISE OR PERCEIVED AUTHORITY

Perceiving someone as an authority provides a convenient shortcut in the decision-making process. If you're an accountant, you're more likely to persuade people on accounting issues; if you're a civil engineer, others are more likely to listen to you when you talk about how a bridge should be constructed; if you're a trademarks lawyer, colleagues are more likely to be convinced of your advice when it comes to copyrighting issues—you get the idea.

Bottom line: if you want to be more persuasive, consciously and deliberately work towards developing a reputation for expertise in one or more key areas.

### HONESTY

Not surprisingly, people are much more likely to buy your ideas if they trust you. A past relationship based on honesty and integrity makes someone much more likely to be convinced of what you have to say.

But building trust takes time, which is not always available. What if you don't have a previous positive relationship with the person you are trying to persuade? This is when testimonials and recommendations come into play.

The best endorsements come from independent sources, ideally from peers of the prospect. If you're trying to persuade a prospect that he should purchase your brand of CRM software, then feedback from his colleague about its helpful features and ease of use will carry much greater weight than the same information from a brochure or during a sales presentation.

If you want to be more influential, actively seek out supporters in your network, people who are willing to recommend and refer you to others.

## LIKEABILITY

People are more likely to be persuaded to your point of view if they like you; perhaps more importantly, they will readily fight you tooth and nail if they don't! It makes sense that likeability drives persuasion—instantly, we strive to identify with the people we like and not unexpectedly, we respect and trust them. So it's easy to give in to those we like.

Of the three characteristics that make up the triple threat, likeability is not only the most abstract, but also the most elusive in terms of defining how you can improve it. While I'm certainly not suggesting that you should spend your entire professional life focusing on being "liked" by everyone, it is in your best interest to at least acknowledge that it is one of the three key factors in your ability to influence. And if you're running into a roadblock in getting someone to buy your ideas, perhaps it's because they don't like you!

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If you can develop a reputation for expertise, a track record for integrity, and renown for building rapport, then you will become more persuasive. You will find it easier to solicit support for your ideas and projects. You will close more deals with clients and vendors while negotiating more favourable terms. You will spend less time and frustration working through disagreements with others. More people will buy your ideas and you will become more effective in your business endeavours.

*Merge Gupta-Sunderji is a speaker, author and consultant whose leadership development practice focuses on turning managers into leaders and people power into results. Through large-audience keynotes, small-group training, one-on-one mentoring, and customized consulting, Merge has given over 65,000 professionals in eight countries specific and practical tools to help them achieve leadership and communications success.*

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*What qualities do you find most persuasive? Share your thoughts using the comments section below.*

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