

# Influence

## Objectives

1. Understand the principles of successful influence.
  2. Explore the dynamics of the “two routes” to successful influence.
  3. Consider the various influence tools and techniques that are available through each of the routes.
  4. Gain a broader understanding of the variety of influence tools available to any negotiator.
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In the last chapter we discussed power as the potential to alter others’ attitudes and behaviors. In this chapter we turn to power’s complement, *influence*—the actual strategies and messages that individuals deploy to bring about desired attitudinal or behavioral change. During negotiations, actors frequently need to convince the other party that they have offered something of value, their offer is reasonable, and they cannot offer more. Negotiators may also want to alter the other party’s beliefs about the importance of her own objectives and convince her that her concessions are not as valuable as she first believed. Negotiators may portray themselves as likable people who should be treated decently. All these efforts are designed to use information, as well as the qualities of the sender and receiver of that information, to adjust the other party’s positions, perceptions, and opinions; we call this group of tactics *influence*.

The pursuit of influence certainly can stem from and capitalize on power in the sense that if you have leverage over someone because of, say, your position of authority or your ability to confer rewards, you can use those things to influence—to get the other person to see or do something your way. But it is crucial to emphasize at the outset of this chapter that *achieving successful influence does not necessarily require having power over the individual(s) you seek to influence*. As we shall see, there are multiple routes to influencing someone else’s attitudes or behavior, some of which benefit from having formal or informal power over the target of influence, but many of which don’t.

People differ widely in their ability to use influence effectively. Some observers think that the ability to persuade is something with which people are born—something they either have or don’t have. Although the natural persuasive abilities of people do differ, persuasion is as much a science as a native ability; everyone has the opportunity to improve persuasive skills. Our aim in this chapter is to discuss a variety of influence tools that are available to the savvy negotiator. To set the stage, we begin with an organizing framework that defines influence seeking in two broad categories that correspond to two different social–psychological avenues for achieving influence.

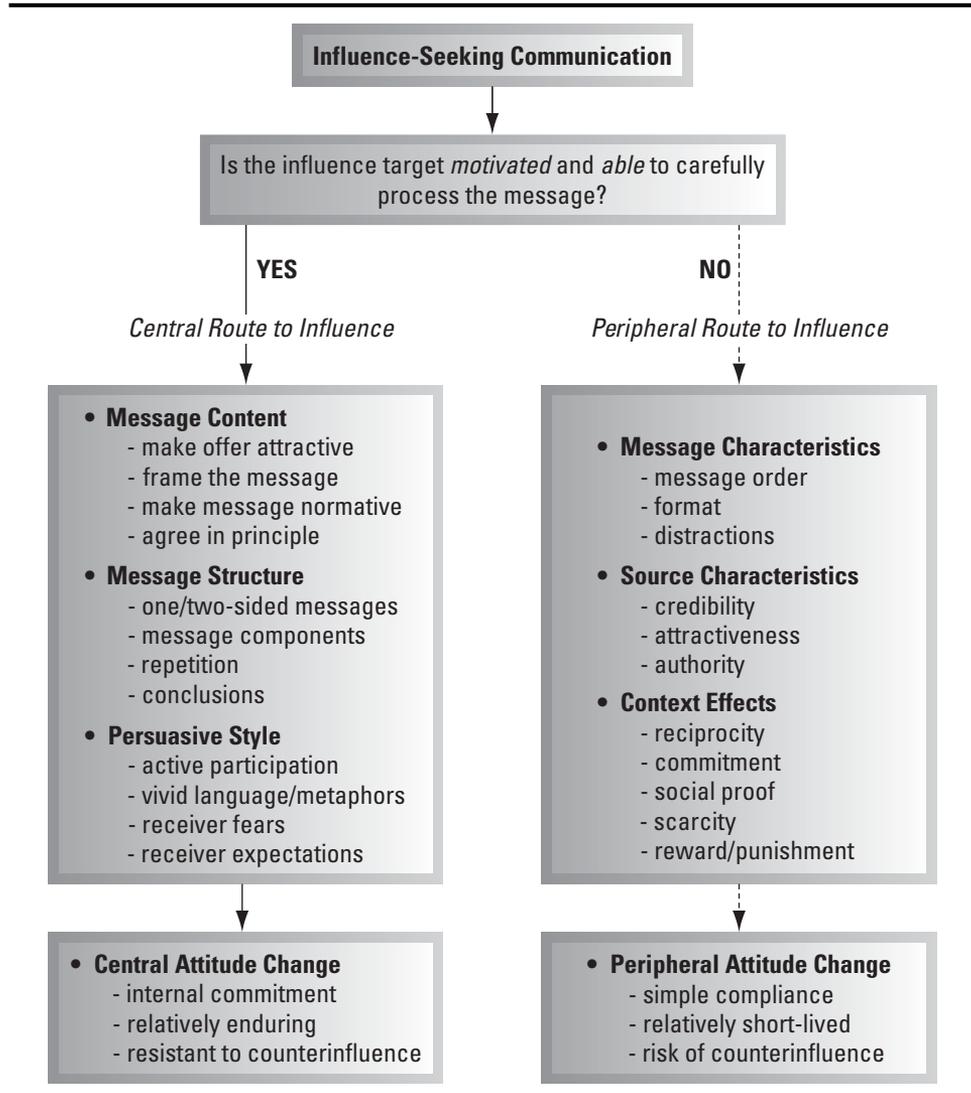
## Two Routes to Influence: An Organizing Model

One way to think about how people are influenced by others is to draw upon a traditional model of communication that focuses on the content and characteristics as the *message* that a sender wants a receiver to believe, accept, or understand. For a long time this was the traditional way that psychologists analyzed influence and persuasion: effective influence occurs when a person is exposed to, pays attention to, comprehends, retains, and acts in accordance with the content of a message. By the 1980s, however, researchers came to understand that people can be influenced—their attitudes and behaviors can be changed—without them having to understand, learn, or retain the specific information contained in a message (Petty, Briñol, and Tormala, 2002). In fact, people can be influenced even when they are not actively thinking about the message itself (Petty and Briñol, 2008). This is not to suggest that the content of influence-seeking messages, like those used by negotiators to try to get the other side to see things his or her way, aren't important—they certainly are in many situations. It is, however, simplistic to think of influence only in terms of the verbal content of persuasive messages aimed by an influence seeker at an influence target.

An alternative way—the approach we choose here—is based on a more contemporary understanding of how influence and persuasion work. This approach, developed first in a stream of research by Richard Petty and John Cacioppo (1986a, 1986b),<sup>1</sup> suggests that there are two general paths by which people are persuaded:

- The first path occurs consciously and involves thinking actively about an influence-seeking message and integrating it into the individual's previously existing cognitive structures (thoughts, intellectual frameworks, etc.). Petty and Cacioppo have labeled this path to persuasion the *central route*, which “occurs when motivation and ability to scrutinize issue-relevant arguments are relatively high” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986b, p. 131).
- The second route to persuasion, the *peripheral route*, is characterized by subtle cues and context, with less active thought and cognitive processing of the message. Persuasion via the peripheral route is thought to occur automatically (i.e., out of conscious awareness), leading to “attitude change without argument scrutiny” (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986b, p. 132). Because the information is not integrated into existing cognitive structures, persuasion occurring via this route is likely to last a shorter time than persuasion occurring via the central route (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986b). A simple example of peripheral-route persuasion is the listener who is convinced by the impressive credentials of the speaker rather than by the arguments the speaker is actually presenting.

For clarity of presentation, we represent elements from both paths in a single diagram (Figure 8.1). Many of the common elements used to increase leverage are part of the central route: the structure and content of the message or the relationship between sender and receiver. However, several influence strategies are designed to persuade through the indirect or peripheral route, such as enhancing the attractiveness and credibility of the source, invoking the principle of reciprocity (you should do something for me because I did something for you), or drawing on appeals to popularity (you should think this way because many others do).<sup>2</sup> The remainder of this chapter addresses the leverage factors presented in Figure 8.1. We organize this discussion according to the distinction between central and peripheral routes to influence.

**FIGURE 8.1** | Two Routes to Influence

The effective use of influence, whether within a negotiation context or in other social settings, may be determined in part by an individual's stylistic talent as a "salesperson" or accomplished communicator, but we take the position that an understanding of the human psychology of influence is at least as important, if not more so. The negotiator who grasps the principles developed in this chapter will have at his or her disposal tools of influence that make it possible to elicit from others desirable and strategically useful attitudes and behaviors. Effective influence is not just a way for negotiators to claim more value for themselves; it can also help to persuade the other party to see possibilities for joint benefit, and

to increase the other party's satisfaction with the deal that does ultimately result (Malhotra and Bazerman, 2008).

## The Central Route to Influence: The Message and Its Delivery

Facts and ideas are clearly important in changing another person's opinions and perceptions, but the effectiveness of a persuasion effort depends on how the facts and ideas are selected, organized, and presented. There are three major issues to consider when constructing a message: the *content* of the message (the facts and topics that should be covered), the *structure* of the message (how the topics and facts should be arranged and organized), and the *delivery style* (how the message should be presented).

### Message Content

When constructing arguments to persuade the other party, negotiators need to decide what topics and facts they should include. In this section, we discuss four questions negotiators need to consider when constructing persuasive arguments: (1) how to make offers attractive to the other party, (2) how to frame messages so the other party will say yes, (3) how to make messages normative, and (4) how to obtain agreements in principle.

**1. Make the Offer Attractive to the Other Party** In structuring the message, negotiators should emphasize the advantage the other party gains from accepting the proposal (Michener and Suchner, 1971). Although this may seem obvious, it is surprising how many negotiators spend more time explaining what aspects of their offer are attractive to themselves than identifying what aspects are likely to be attractive to the other party. Experienced negotiators ensure that the other party understands what he or she will gain by accepting an offer. To do this well, negotiators need to understand the other party's needs. Salespeople often identify a customer's needs and requirements before they get down to the details of what a particular product or service can do for the purchaser. Labor negotiators often have preliminary, unofficial meetings with management at which both parties discuss the upcoming deliberations and signal the high-priority issues for the year. With information about the other party's needs and interests, negotiators can construct offers with highly appealing features.

When negotiators are on the *receiving* end of a proposal, they frequently choose not to talk about the attractive features of an offer but rather to highlight why certain features are undesirable. They try to argue that what the other party is trying to sell is not what they need, is inadequate, or does not meet their specifications. Thus, persuasion can be a struggle to define or evaluate the attractiveness of an offer. The negotiator making the offer stresses its attractive features, hoping to minimize further concessions. The receiver of the offer stresses its unattractive features, hoping to receive more concessions. The better a negotiator understands the other's real needs and concerns, the more he or she can anticipate the other's objections and structure the presentation to counteract them.

**2. Frame the Message So the Other Party Will Say Yes** Advertisers discovered long ago that people who agree with one statement or proposal, even though it may be minor, are likely to agree with a second, more significant statement or proposal from the same person or on the same topic (Fern, Monroe, and Avila, 1986).<sup>3</sup> Hence, if you can get the other party

to agree to something—almost anything—then you have laid the foundation for subsequent agreement. The task is to find something that the other party can agree with that puts him or her in the mind-set of saying yes. A real estate salesperson who gets potential buyers to agree that the house they are visiting is in a nice neighborhood or has a nice yard for their children has made the first step toward getting them to say yes to buying the house (even if it is not the ideal size, layout, or price).

**3. Make the Message Normative** It is easy to assume that people are driven by simple and direct self-interest. There is plenty of evidence, however, to indicate that people are motivated to behave consistently with their values, that is, their religious, social, or ethical standards. These standards become part of people's self-image, a concept in their mind of what they are really like. People will go to considerable lengths to act or say things consistent with their self-image. At times, people act politely when in fact they are feeling quite hostile. People can act generously when they are actually financially strained and feel like being greedy (Reardon, 1981). They behave this way to preserve their self-image and to convince others that they are nice people (see our discussion of face saving in Chapter 10).<sup>4</sup>

A powerful argument in negotiation is to show the other person that by following a course of action (your proposal), he will be acting in accordance both with his values and with some higher (more noble, moral, or ethical) code of conduct. Politicians use normative messages to justify fiscal policies to promote domestic purchases (e.g., “buy American,” “protect American jobs”), and interest groups use normative messages to either promote their points of view or demean other points of view (e.g., “save a tree,” “tax and spend liberals”). At times, the simple statement “This is the right (or proper) thing to do” may carry considerable weight. People work hard to take responsibility for actions that lead to positive outcomes (Schlenker and Riess, 1979).

**4. Suggest an Agreement in Principle** There are times when getting the other party to accept an “agreement in principle” may be a valuable step in a negotiation. For example, when there is bitter conflict between two parties who cannot seem to agree on anything, obtaining agreement on a general principle, such as a cease-fire, may be the first “yes” statement to which both parties can subscribe. In the negotiations between Israel and Egypt over the Sinai in the late 1970s, no details were settled about the fate of the Palestinians, but an agreement on the principle of Palestinian self-rule was reached. Although an agreement in principle is desirable when other options are blocked, it still takes a great deal of work to turn such an agreement into one that contains specific details and action proposals. Principles sound good, and most people may agree with what they advocate, but there is usually great uncertainty about how a principle applies to a specific situation. For example, to return to the Middle East and the question of Palestine, even if the parties agree to the principle of trading land for peace, there is still a great deal of work to do to specify which land and what kind of peace.

### Message Structure

People are influenced not only by what negotiators say but also by how they arrange the words. Any writer or speaker faces the question of how to present material in the most logical or persuasive manner. How should arguments be arranged? Should counterarguments

or opposing ideas be mentioned at all? There has been a considerable amount of research on the persuasive power of different message structures. Surprisingly, many of those elements that you might expect to have an important impact, such as the structure of logic in the message, have not been clearly shown to be important. Here we discuss four aspects of message structure that help to explain when and how persuasion occurs through the central route: (1) one- and two-sided messages, (2) message components, (3) repetition, and (4) conclusions.

**1. One- and Two-Sided Messages** When negotiators try to persuade the other party it is because they believe that the other holds an opinion different from theirs. Many people deal with this problem by ignoring arguments and opinions that might support the other party's position—a *one-sided* approach. Many politicians not only do not mention their opponent's point of view but may never even mention their opponent's name. Advertisements for consumer products often refrain from identifying competing products by name or staging an open, direct comparison; although more common than it used to be, advertisers do not often refer explicitly to competitors and comparatively evaluate the features or qualities of competing products.

An alternate approach to ignoring the competition is to mention and describe the opposing point of view, and then show how and why it is less desirable than the presenter's point of view—a *two-sided* approach. The question then arises: Which of these approaches is most effective?

In general, *two-sided messages are considered to be more effective than one-sided messages* (Jackson and Allen, 1987). More specifically, two-sided messages appear to be most effective (1) when the other party is well educated, (2) when the other party initially disagrees with the position, (3) when the other party will be exposed to people who will argue points of view different from the position advocated, and (4) when the issue discussed is already familiar. In addition, two-sided arguments work best when the preferred argument is presented last (Zimbardo, Ebbesen, and Maslach, 1977). But there is a drawback: research has shown that a change in someone's attitude is more likely to produce a corresponding change in behavior when that person has been exposed to a one-sided message rather than a two-sided message (Glasman and Albarracín, 2006). In sum, when dealing with reasonably intelligent receivers, it is a mistake to ignore the impact of counterarguments. The other party will be formulating them as you speak, and it is an advantage to refute them by using two-sided messages. There is, however, the possibility that a two-sided argument will do a better job changing the other person's mind—which sometimes is all that's needed—than it will changing actual behavior.

**2. Message Components** Big ideas or large propositions are hard to grasp and accept, especially when they are significantly different from your own. Negotiators can help the other party understand and accept their arguments by breaking them into smaller, more understandable pieces—a process known as “fractionating” (Fisher, 1964). It is even better if one can show that the component parts contain statements that the other party has already accepted or agreed with. For example, a company that is having trouble getting a union to accept a whole package of rule changes could break its presentation down into separate discussions of specific rules: transfers between departments within a plant, transfers between

plants, temporary changes in work classifications, and so on. In one case, for example, a union was very interested in making changes to work rules to preserve job security; having already said yes to these changes, the union seemed more receptive to management's argument for other work rule changes. In addition, it is possible that breaking down complex arguments into smaller parts will lead the parties to see the possibilities to logroll, bundle, and trade off across issues (see Chapter 3) because the issues will be seen in sharper focus. If the goal is to find and capitalize on integrative potential, however, it is important that the parties not let splitting up of issues into smaller pieces lead to separate and final settlements on those piecemeal issues. To work as mechanisms for achieving mutual gains, logrolls, bundles, and trade-offs require that multiple issues be on the table and play. Integrative agreements are hindered if the parties take up, settle on, and dispense with individual issues one by one.

**3. Repetition** We need only think of the regular blitz of typical television or radio advertisements to realize the power of repetition in getting a message across. Repetition encourages central-route processing, increasing the likelihood that the influence target will scrutinize the message, and thus enhances the likelihood that the message will be understood (Cacioppo and Petty, 1985). However, repeating a point is effective only for the first few times. After that, additional repetition does not significantly change attitudes (McGuire, 1973) and may become annoying and lead people to react against the message.

**4. Conclusions** Sometimes writers or speakers will make an argument and then state the conclusion; other times, they will let listeners draw their own conclusions. Letting others draw their own conclusion (as long as it is the conclusion one wants drawn) can lead to a very effective presentation. Research suggests that when negotiating with people who are very intelligent or who have not yet made up their minds, leaving the conclusion open is a good approach (assuming your arguments up to this point have pulled them toward the "right" conclusion). In contrast, for people whose ideas are already well-formulated and strongly held, leaving the conclusion unstated risks leaving the most important part of the influence attempt undone. On balance, it is usually best not to assume that given a set of facts or arguments, the other party will reach the same conclusion you would reach; rather, draw explicit conclusions for listeners to ensure that they have understood the argument completely (Feingold and Knapp, 1977).<sup>5</sup>

### **Persuasive Style: How to Pitch the Message**

When negotiators select a delivery style for the message they have constructed, they set the emotional tone and manner of their presentation. Some people are belligerent; others are solicitous and accommodating. Some people make speeches; others start a dialogue. Some present detailed facts and draw specific conclusions; others use metaphors and paint beautiful pictures with words. We now consider four major elements of persuasive style and how they affect successful persuasion: (1) active participation versus passive responding, (2) use of vivid language and metaphors, (3) use of threats to incite fears, and (4) violation of the receiver's expectations.

**1. Encourage Active Participation** People are more likely to change their attitudes and beliefs for the long term when they are actively involved in the process of learning new material (Johnson and Eagly, 1990).<sup>6</sup> Good teachers know this—rather than lecture, they ask questions and start discussions. Teachers are even more effective when they can get students both intellectually and emotionally involved. Role-plays and cases can help negotiators make use of the power of active participation. Negotiators who can use active approaches are generally more persuasive than those who don't because an active approach requires the receiver to exert effort, which leads to involvement, which leads to attitude change.

It can be helpful to precede negotiations with a friendly and engaging dialogue. This extends beyond simple politeness; inquiring about an individual's day or mood and then responding accordingly can motivate him or her to cooperate (Howard, 1990). Dolinski, Nawrat, and Rudak (2001) demonstrated that when a request is preceded by a pleasant dialogue rather than simply a pleasant monologue, subjects were more willing to concede to the request. Furthermore, these findings generalized across a variety of different interactions and settings, even holding up when the subject declared being in a bad mood. As we mentioned in our discussion of communication in Chapter 6, the development of rapport between negotiators has a number of positive benefits for avoiding impasse and achieving integrative outcomes (e.g., Morris, Nadler, Kurtzbert, and Thompson, 2000; Swaab, Postmes, van Beest, and Spears, 2007). Engaging the other party in dialogue may lead them to perceive the situation as an interaction with an acquaintance, rather than a confrontation with a stranger (Dolinsky et al., 2001), and requests from acquaintances are more likely to be met with favor than those coming from strangers.

**2. Consider Vividness and Intensity of Language** The vividness and intensity of the language negotiators use have a major effect on their persuasiveness. Saying "This is certainly the best price you will get" is more compelling than saying "This is quite a good price." Similarly, the statement "I don't feel like going out tonight" is not as intense as "You can't drag me out tonight with a team of horses." The intensity of language can also be increased through the use of colorful metaphors, swear words, or a change in intonation—from quiet to loud or loud to quiet (Bowers, 1964).

You might think that the most intense language would also be the most persuasive. On the contrary, language of relatively low intensity is at times more effective (Bowers, 1964). Evidence indicates that people react negatively to persuasive attempts using language they perceive as too intense (Burgoon and King, 1974). People under stress seem to be particularly receptive to messages using low-intensity language and more inclined to reject those using high-intensity language (Jones and Burgoon, 1975). The impact of language intensity is even more complex, however: research has shown that the effect of intense language depends in part on who uses it. Sources with high credibility can use more intense language than those who are not seen as credible (Burgoon and Stewart, 1975). It is also the case that an effective influencer will match his or her emotional fervor to the ability of the target of influence to receive and interpret the message (Conger, 1998). Bottom line: although there is a strong temptation to use intense language to make a point, it is often wise to moderate this impulse.

Metaphors and analogies are a particularly useful way to augment the vividness of a message in the service of persuasion (Bowers and Osborn, 1966; Conger, 1998). An auto

salesperson can give a potential customer information about a car's engine, mileage, acceleration, and so forth, but for someone not concerned with the specific technical details can make these points by saying, "This car flies like the wind and doesn't guzzle gas." Using metaphors to excess may lead the other party to believe that you're filled with hot air (itself a metaphor!), but using them to summarize some facts or to create a visual impression can be valuable in persuasion. An important caution for negotiators, though: when using metaphors, be careful to choose analogies that are "correct" for the situation. This is especially challenging when negotiating across cultures because metaphors do not always translate well, and could leave the other party befuddle, or worse, insulted. (We discuss culture and negotiation fully in Chapter 16.)

**3. Use Threats; Incite Fears** Messages that contain threats—threats of strikes by unions or lockouts by management, threats to harm the other party's reputation, or threats to break off negotiations—can be useful when a negotiator needs to underscore the absolute importance of a point being made. In essence, threats are if-then statements with serious negative consequences attached: "If you do X, then I will be forced to do Y."

Because of their dramatic nature and the emotional responses they can evoke, threats may be tempting to use (see Chapter 2). In fact, threats are probably used less frequently than one might expect, for several reasons. First, the other person's reaction to a threat is hard to predict. A second reason is that it is hard to know how menacing the threat appears to the other party. Often threats appear more powerful to the people who make them than they do to those on the receiving end. Third, a threatened party has the option to "call the bluff," forcing the negotiator who made the threat to carry it out. Often, following through on a threat will cost more than negotiators are willing to pay (Lytle, Brett, and Shapiro, 1999), and not following through can make a negotiator lose credibility. Finally, threats may produce compliance (a short-term change in behavior to avoid the consequences), but they do not usually produce commitment (a genuine and lasting change in attitude or belief). As we have pointed out, negotiating parties often want to reach an agreement they can live with. People can find many ways to avoid or undermine arrangements with which they were forced to comply but to which they are not committed.

How a threat is constructed and delivered can determine its effectiveness. Research suggests that threats can be effective if they increase the fear level of the recipient of the message (Boster and Mongeau, 1984; Sutton, 1982). Consider, for example, a manager who is negotiating with another about the flow of work between their two departments; the first manager intimates that if an agreement is not reached, the other manager will be portrayed to higher management as uncooperative. To be most effective, this kind of message should be accompanied by both a suggested alternative action that will reduce or eliminate the likelihood that the feared outcome will occur. Also, the effectiveness of a threat may depend on its timing and form. Sinaceur and Neale (2005) showed that threats made early in a negotiation are more effective when made *implicitly* (i.e., suggesting that there will be negative consequences without explicitly stating what that will entail). On the other hand, threats made late in the negotiation were more effective when they are *explicit*. Negotiators in this study saw explicit threats that came early and implicit threats that came later as unduly aggressive, which may explain their tactical ineffectiveness.

**4. Violate the Receiver's Expectations** In *All the King's Men*, Robert Penn Warren (1946) describes a scene in which Willy Stark, the demagogic candidate for governor, is about to speak to a group of wealthy citizens to raise funds for his campaign. The citizens support neither his radical proposals nor his aggressive manner of speech. When he arrives, Stark is conservatively dressed and greets them in a quiet, relaxed manner. In a conversational tone, he proceeds to describe some modest proposals for social change, along with some sensible ways of financing them. His audience is at first surprised, then impressed, and finally won over. Stark is employing the technique of *violating expectations*. People who argue positions that are thought to be counter to their self-interest are generally more persuasive because they violate the receiver's expectation about what the sender should be advocating (O'Keefe, 1990). For instance, an automobile mechanic recently suggested that one of the authors of this book should use higher octane gas in his car to reduce maintenance and save money. This message was persuasive because the mechanic was arguing against his own self-interest (future auto repair revenue) when he suggested the change in fuel (his business does not sell gasoline).

Another way that receivers' expectations can be violated occurs when they expect one style of delivery from the speaker and then experience a very different style. For example, when one expects to be subjected to intense language (loud, volatile, provocative, etc.), one prepares defenses and counterarguments. If one instead encounters moderate, casual, reasonable language, one can relax one's defenses, listen to the message less critically, and be more likely to be persuaded (Miller and Burgoon, 1979). Great orators such as Winston Churchill and Martin Luther King Jr. used this style, frequently modulating the intensity of their voices to hold the audience's attention. Although this is not a stylistic tactic that everyone can use, skilled orators have a valuable tool at their disposal. This process can also work in reverse—an emotionally intense speaker may equally persuade audiences who were expecting quiet, controlled, highly rational discourse.

More generally, Barry (2001) proposed a model of interpersonal influence that revolves around violating expectations of influence targets as a way to increase one's effectiveness as an influencer. The model proposes that violated expectations will alter how the target of influence attends to an influence-seeking message. For example, if an influence seeker unexpectedly uses friendly tactics in what has up until now been a formal or aloof relationship, the target may become favorably disposed to comply and engage in diminished cognitive scrutiny of the message itself. Conversely, negative arousal created by (for example) an unexpectedly direct or assertive request may inhibit influence if the violation of expectations leads the target to scrutinize the message more closely. A clever study by Santos, Leve, and Pratkanis (1994) illustrated the compliance-gaining benefits of "unexpected" requests. Researchers acting as panhandlers asked some passers-by for a quarter (a "typical" request) and others for 17 cents or 37 cents (a "strange" request). Strange requests elicited significantly higher rates of compliance in the form of a willingness to give money, and they also elicited more questions from those approached about the reasons behind needing money.

## Section Summary

In summary, negotiators need to take care when they construct a message to persuade another party to their point of view. Assuming the target of influence is motivated and able to pay attention to the persuasive appeal, then messages that are well reasoned, evidence-based,

and logical will successfully persuade (Crano and Prislin, 2006). Aspects of the message content, message structure, and delivery style can all influence the extent to which a message meets these criteria and hence is persuasive. In other words, how one says something can be as important as what one has to say, and if the other party is not persuaded by the arguments, then perhaps the negotiator did not construct the message effectively. When messages are well crafted and influence does successfully occur through the “central route,” the change in the target’s attitudes is more likely to be long lasting and resistant to counterinfluence (Petty, Haugtvedt, and Smith, 1995).

## Peripheral Routes to Influence

Thus far, we have focused on organizing the structure and content of the message in order to create leverage through the “central” route to influence (refer back to the left-hand side of Figure 8.1). In this section, we consider ways that a person can influence others through the “peripheral” route (the right-hand side of Figure 8.1). In such cases, the receiver attends less to the substance of persuasive arguments and is instead susceptible to more “automatic” influence through subtle cues. This usually occurs when the target of influence is either *unmotivated* or *unable* to attend carefully to the substance contained within a persuasive message (Petty and Briñol, 2008). As we suggested earlier, persuasion that occurs through the peripheral route is less likely to bring about real attitude change, more likely to last a shorter time, and more vulnerable to counterinfluence (Petty et al., 1995).

In our discussion of peripheral routes to influence we draw in part on the work of psychologist Robert Cialdini (2001), who argues that this type of persuasion can work almost automatically, like an eye blink or a startle response. Cialdini spent many years investigating why people comply with requests that, upon further reflection, they would rather not have agreed to. His research represents a skillful blend of laboratory investigation and observation of “compliance experts” such as salespeople, fund-raisers, and marketing and advertising experts. The insights that emerge are useful not only for achieving successful influence in negotiation and other contexts, but also for avoiding being a “victim” of these persuasive traps.

Our discussion of peripheral routes to influence considers three sets of strategies: message aspects, attributes of the persuader (the message “source”), and elements of the influence context.

### Aspects of Messages That Foster Peripheral Influence

When targets of influence are unmotivated or unable to pay close attention to the influence seeker’s message, they are susceptible to being influenced by message elements that exist apart from the actual arguments involved. We discuss three such elements here: the way in which the influence seeker chooses to order those arguments, the format through which arguments are conveyed, and the use of distraction to interfere with the target’s ability to think effortfully about the arguments in play.

**Message Order** In preparing a persuasive argument, negotiators usually have one major point, piece of information, or illustration that is particularly important or compelling. Where should it be placed in the message? At the beginning? In the middle? At the end?

Research tells us one thing clearly—do not place the important point in the middle of the message (Bettinghaus, 1966). So should it be at the beginning or at the end? When the topics are familiar, interesting, or controversial to the receiver, the important points should be made early, exposing the receiver to the *primacy effect*: the first item in a long list of items is the one most likely to be remembered. Thus, the negotiator should state messages that are attractive to the receiver early, before they present something the receiver may not want to hear. In contrast, when the topic is uninteresting, unfamiliar, or not very important to the receiver, the most critical point should be placed at the end of the message to take advantage of the *recency effect*: the tendency for the last item presented to be the best remembered. The recency effect should be considered when the message is likely to be contrary to the receiver's current point of view (Clark, 1984; Rosnow and Robinson, 1967).

**Format** In our discussion of communication (Chapter 6), we addressed how negotiation is affected by the communication channels through which it can occur (face to face, telephone, e-mail, etc.). The same goes for influence, where certain arguments or appeals may be more or less effective depending on the channel in use or the format of the presentation (Barry and Fulmer, 2004). One way that a choice of message format can induce peripheral influence is if it elicits a snap judgment regarding the legitimacy of the argument. For instance, Herb Cohen (1980) suggests that written rules carry more weight than those given verbally. Thus, a principle could be seen as more credible or believable, and hence more likely to be adopted, if it is in a policy manual or the fine print of a contract than if it is merely expressed orally. A recent study by Guadagno and Cialdini (2007) found gender differences in the effectiveness of persuasion through different communication channels. Compared with men, women in the study were less receptive to persuasive messages sent by e-mail unless there was a prior relationship with the sender. Women also reported less liking for the communicator when e-mail was the vehicle for the influence attempt.

**Distractions** One factor that makes the persuasion process complex is that people start to defend themselves against being influenced as soon as they suspect that someone is trying to persuade them. As they listen, part of their attention might be devoted to what is being said, but a large portion is also devoted to developing counterarguments (Brock, 1963; Festinger and Maccoby, 1964). Persuasion efforts are more effective if they can reduce the other party's efforts to develop defensive counterarguments. One way to do this is to have a *distraction* occur at the same time the message is sent. Distractions apparently absorb the effort that the other party normally would put into building counterarguments and leave the listener "vulnerable to the message appeals" (Reardon, 1981, p. 192). In other words, when receivers are distracted, they are less able to engage in issue-relevant thinking (Petty and Brock, 1981), and hence they may be more susceptible to processing peripheral cues that may push them toward a particular choice. For example, during an oral presentation of the economic advantages of an offer, a negotiator could produce papers with charts and graphs, hand them to the other party, and help that person turn from one chart to another as the oral presentation continues. Presumably, the charts and graphs absorb that part of the other party's attention that might normally go into formulating counterarguments. Distractions seem to inhibit the receiver's subvocalization (what people say to themselves as they hear a message). Sometimes subvocalizations are counterarguments, which occur

when the receiver is opposed to or cautious about the message, but they can be supportive arguments as well. When receivers like what is being said (e.g., a friend trying to persuade you to take a second helping of chocolate cake), subvocalizations will encourage you to accept the offer. In a situation like this, a receiver who wants to protect him- or herself from temptation should in turn create distractions (Petty, Wells, and Brock, 1976).

### Source Characteristics That Foster Peripheral Influence

When recipients of a persuasive message are unmotivated or unable to attend closely to the substance of the persuasive appeal, they become vulnerable to source effects. In other words, someone who is not paying close attention to the message may be unduly influenced by the characteristics of the person or organization delivering the message. A wide variety of source effects can potentially have an effect on the recipient of a persuasive message. We group them here into three broad categories: credibility, attractiveness, and authority.

**Source Credibility** During a negotiation, both parties exchange information, opinions, and interpretations. What, and how much, should be believed? On one hand, there are often strong incentives for negotiators to mislead each other (see also Chapter 9 on ethics). On the other hand, negotiators have to accept and believe at least some of the information they are given, or successful negotiation is impossible. As a negotiator, you cannot check every fact and statement. The more information one is willing to accept from the other party without independent verification, the easier the task will be. The reverse is also true—the more credible you are to the other party, the more persuasive you will be.

To illustrate, let's assume that you are buying a house. The sellers tell you that they have three other parties coming to see the house this afternoon; two of them are being transferred to this area and have only one day to locate a house. If this is true, and you like the house, it would be to your advantage to make an offer now rather than delay your decision and possibly find that one of the afternoon visitors has bought the house. But are the sellers' statements true? No doubt the sellers know whether or not there are other potential buyers coming that same day; hence, there is no question that they are competent or qualified to have good information. The issue is whether or not they are credible.

There has been quite a lot of research over the last several decades demonstrating how and when the credibility of the source of an influence attempt matters (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Many factors contribute to source credibility. Here we discuss several that negotiators can control, beginning with the most important ones: qualifications, trustworthiness, and self-presentation.

**1. Qualifications and Expertise** When people are determining how much to believe another person, they often ask, "Is this person in a position to possess the information he or she claims to have? Is he or she competent and qualified?" The stronger the person's perceived qualifications and expertise, the higher the credibility (Swenson, Nash, and Roos, 1984). Judgments about qualifications can substitute for judgments about the quality of the arguments that source is delivering—that's what makes source credibility a "peripheral" route to influence. Research studies have shown when people are not motivated to think deeply about the arguments they are hearing, they will let qualifications of the source of the

argument determine whether or not to be persuaded, even when the arguments are weak (e.g., Chaiken and Maheswaran, 1994).

Expertise can be established in a number of ways. Sometimes your occupation, education, or past experiences will establish your qualifications and therefore the perception of your competence. At other times, there are no obvious ways to make your expertise known. Stereotypes can lead others to see you as lacking the requisite expertise to be credible. Some might see women as lacking knowledge about mechanical things; others might view men as underinformed about child care or cooking. In situations where you are unknown or apt to be viewed stereotypically, it's worth making an extra effort to establish qualifications and expertise. One way to do this is to work your education or credentials into the conversation (e.g., "In law school I learned that . . ."). Another is to cite credible sources of information (e.g., "A story in this morning's *New York Times* said . . ."). Finally, try asking questions or drawing conclusions that could only be derived from in-depth, firsthand knowledge or experience.

**2. Reputation for Trustworthiness and Integrity** As the target of a persuasion attempt, it is natural to wonder, "Is this person reporting accurately what he or she knows? Is he or she personally believable or trustworthy? Is this a person of integrity?" (Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz, 1966). Integrity is character—the personal values and ethics that ground your behavior in high moral principles. Integrity is the quality that assures people you can be trusted, you will be honest, and you will do as you say. If people trust you with confidential information, you will not disclose that information to others. Finally, if you make an agreement, you will abide by its terms and conditions and follow through on it (Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin, 1992).

Conversely, people with a reputation for being dishonest or insincere have an extremely difficult time in negotiations—they tend not to be believed, even when they tell the truth. Research has shown that negotiators with reputations for self-interested behavior elicit negative reactions that can dampen the entire negotiation process, leading to poorer outcomes. Even when the negotiator is known to be an expert, a poor reputation tends to overshadow expertise (Tinsley, O'Conner, and Sullivan, 2002). A reputation for being dishonest is very difficult to change, so it is not surprising that professional negotiators work very hard to protect their reputation. While negotiators using a competitive strategy are often expected to inflate, magnify, and distort in order to present things in the best possible light for their side, a one-time success may contribute directly to future credibility problems. It is therefore critical for negotiators to consider the long-term consequences of their behavior if they are to be trusted by others (we introduced the role of trust in Chapter 3 and will explore it in greater depth in Chapter 10).

**3. Self-Presentation** People appear more or less credible because of their presence—the way they present themselves to others. Someone who seems hesitant, confused, or uncertain when giving information is not as convincing as a person who appears calm, confident, and comfortable. A friendly, open person is easier to converse with (and easier to believe) than someone who is distant, abrasive, or haughty. A person with a dynamic vocal style and a strong delivery is often more persuasive than one without these attributes. Communicators can create a favorable presence in several ways. It is not an earth-shaking revelation to note that how you dress, speak, and behave will influence how credible you appear to

others. What may not be as obvious is how you should adjust your appearance and style to increase (or avoid eroding) your credibility. Should you wear a suit for an interview, even if you usually wear jeans and a T-shirt? Should you adopt some of the local speech pronunciations and drop those that are native to you? Is a member of the clergy more effective in clerical garb or in street clothes? In general, researchers have found that it is best to be “normal” (Bettinghaus, 1980), meaning to act appropriately, naturally, and without affectation. A Harvard-educated politician with a New England accent who tries to spice his language with “Aw, shucks” and “y’all” in Texas will not appear normal; neither will a college student who drops in to buy a Porsche dressed in muddy boots and grimy work clothes.

**4. First Impressions** Self-presentation can be especially important for establishing credibility early in a relationship or negotiation event. Put simply, first impressions matter. How people dress, behave, and speak can be enormously important in the first few minutes of meeting, especially with a stranger. When meeting others for the first time, people generally tend to evaluate them positively rather than negatively (Greenberg and Miller, 1966). People frequently remain open-minded during the first meeting; if they do form a first impression, they often err toward the positive viewpoint. Although this bias may seem to be an advantage in helping persuade someone you have recently met, keep in mind that it is probably working the other way as well.

**5. Status Differences** Status is signaled by a variety of criteria: occupation, age, education level, the neighborhood where a person lives, dress, type of automobile, and the like. A president of a major corporation, for example, has more status than a university professor, but less than a Supreme Court Justice. Status confers credibility, which in turn can make someone influential, in several ways. First, status gives people visibility, which allows them to get attention and be heard. It also confers prestige, lending the image that certain people are worth listening to (Bettinghaus, 1980). However, a status difference may also increase resistance, because listeners may expect to be persuaded by a high-status communicator, and therefore increase their defenses against the effort. Persuaders need to decide whether they should enforce a status difference (act or dress consistently with their status) or minimize the difference by acting or dressing more like the listener.

**6. Intention to Persuade** Does a negotiator initially come across as a huckster or as cool, poised, and polished? While people may give the benefit of the doubt in their initial judgment, the more they detect that a negotiator’s mission is to influence their views, the more suspicious and resistant they may become. For instance, when the phone rings unexpectedly, it is often easy to identify the telemarketer who mispronounces your name and tries to involve you in friendly chit-chat (“How are you this evening?”) while she eases into her prepared sales pitch (“I’m glad you’re well. Do you ever have problems with . . .”). By the time she has gotten to the sales pitch, your defenses are most likely already well fortified. In contrast, communicating with natural enthusiasm, sincerity, and spontaneity may take the edge off persuasive communication, reduce defensive reactions, and enhance the speaker’s credibility. Many skillful negotiators and persuaders may therefore assume a mild-mannered or even slightly confused demeanor to minimize the negative impact of a hard, persuasive style while giving or getting the information they need.

**7. Associates** Whom you associate with also can influence how you are perceived, in terms of both status and expertise. Judicious name dropping (i.e., mentioning well-known people who are also credible and prestigious) and even arranging for introductions or endorsements by people who can add to your reputation can be useful steps. There is, of course, a downside to invoking associates if it isn't done skillfully: the line between being perceived as admirably "well-connected" and as a shameless "name-dropper" can be a fine one indeed.

**8. Persistence and Tenacity** Persistence and tenacity are valuable personal qualities in a negotiator. Children are often considered great negotiators because they are so wonderfully persistent in pursuing what they want. Saying "no" usually does not stop the child from asking; children find all kinds of creative ways to persist in trying to achieve their objective (the candy bar, the toy, watching the TV show). From watching how children persist as negotiators, we can learn that part of persistence is doggedly pursuing the objective but that another part is finding new, unique ways to pursue the same request. The effective use of persistence doesn't mean pursuing your goals blindly and rigidly because you can be effectively rebuffed; instead, it means displaying creativity in finding novel approaches to pursuing the goal. Persistent people are comfortable being in a contentious mode with others—they don't fear conflict and try to escape simply because of a difference of opinion or views. They are persistent, but they are also flexible, redefining strategy and approach as times and conditions change.

Persistence can therefore help enhance a source's credibility to the extent that the target of the message isn't annoyed by that persistence, but rather comes to see it as a sign that the communicator is dedicated and tenacious. Box 8.1 presents an intriguing example of how hearing something repeatedly leads people to assume it must come from a credible source.

**Source Attractiveness** People will treat others better when they like them than when they don't (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Bichsel, and Hoffman, 2002). They are less likely to feel that attractive negotiators will be dishonest or attempt to coerce them (Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma, 1973). They are more likely to accept their influence, to believe them, and to trust them (Chaiken, 1986). Being nice and pleasant is a logical step to being more persuasive. Personal attractiveness may increase persuasiveness for a number of reasons. People may have a tendency to let their guard down and trust attractive people more readily. Attractive people may receive a lot of attention, or they may cause others to imitate them in order to be more like them (Trenholm, 1989). Personal attractiveness also increases liking (O'Keefe, 1990). An individual can enhance his or her personal attractiveness to a target of influence or a negotiating opponent in several ways, discussed next.

**1. Friendliness** A critically important attribute that a negotiator can have is the ability to be friendly and outgoing and to establish personal relationships with others—particularly the other parties in the negotiation. Warmth; empathy; and simple, direct, personal interest in others all help to soften the harder edges of other influence tactics. Rather than immediately getting down to business, successful negotiators use friendliness to make the other party feel comfortable and at ease, to get to know the other negotiator and show an interest

## If a Message Is Believable, Does That Make the Source Credible?

Apparently so, to judge from a clever study conducted by researchers Alison Fragale and Chip Heath at Stanford University. Their experiment was part of a larger investigation of why rumors spread and what it is that leads people to believe that a rumor is accurate. A rumor is more believable, they assumed, when it is thought to come from a credible or trusted source. That seems logical enough, but does it work the other way around? Will people assume that if a message is believable then it must have come from a credible source?

To answer this question, Fragale and Heath presented experimental subjects with several “urban legends”—rumors—regarding food contamination. (Two of the allegations used in the study were “The wax used to line Cup-o-Noodles cups has been shown to cause cancer in rats” and “Jack-in-the-Box has fired two employees for spitting in customers’ burgers before serving them”.) The participants in the experiment saw some of the statements just two times, but they viewed some of them five times. Participants were then told that each of the allegations was originally reported in one of two places—*Consumer Reports* (a high-

credibility source) or the *National Enquirer* (a low-credibility source)—and were asked to say which they thought was most likely the source for each allegation.

Results showed that participants in the experiment were more likely to say an allegation came from *Consumer Reports* if they saw it five times than just two times. In other words, merely seeing the exact same rumor a few more times led people to infer that it came from a higher credibility source. If repetition leads to belief (the more you hear something, the more you believe it), then these studies show that people are more likely to assume that a “believable” message must come from a credible source. Ordinarily we assume that communicators try to enhance their credibility in order to get audiences to believe what they have to say; this research shows that in some situations if you can get them to buy your message, enhancement of your credibility may follow.

*Source:* Adapted from A. R. Fragale and C. Heath, “Evolving Informational Credentials: The (Mis)attribution of Believable Facts to Credible Sources,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (2004), pp. 225–36.

in his or her situation, and to discover things that both parties may have in common. As we mentioned earlier, requests are more favorably received when preceded by informal dialogue (Dolinski et al., 2001). Friendly, outgoing negotiators are also likely to use reward and praise to encourage and support the other party, whereas less friendly negotiators will be more likely to use criticism and verbal punishment.

**2. Ingratiation** Ingratiation involves enhancing the other’s self-image or reputation through statements or actions, and thus enhancing one’s own image in the same way (Jones, 1964; Vonk, 2002). Flattering another person by giving compliments is perhaps the most obvious form of ingratiation. Handing out flattery presumably induces others to like you and be more prone to accept your persuasive arguments (Gordon, 1996). Negotiators congratulate others on their excellent and thorough preparation, their considerate suggestions, or their willingness to listen or compromise or be reasonable. Compliments can be a potent means of ingratiation, not only because people like to receive them, but also because the norm of reciprocity leaves the other party with the obligation to return something for the compliment (Cialdini, 2001). And there is no denying its potential usefulness: Ellis and colleagues (2002) showed that ingratiation tactics used during a job interview positively influenced the reviewer’s perception of the applicant, even moreso than the applicant’s self-promotion tactics (Ellis, West, Ryan, and DeShon, 2002). Because it is an obvious

option, ingratiation is used often; but if used poorly, it can backfire. When people are complimented for attributes they do not have or actions they know they did not perform well, or when the praise seems excessive, they are likely to become wary, wondering about the ingratiation's hidden agenda or ulterior motives.

**3. Likability** The liking principle is quite straightforward: people you like have more influence over you (see our discussion of similarity under source factors earlier in this chapter). If you like the communicator, you are more likely to be persuaded by him or her and less likely to contest a weak or counterattitudinal argument (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002). However, research has shown that likability is less important than other credibility factors, such as expertise (Eagly and Chaiken, 1975).

The effects of the liking principle are insidious. Liking can occur through many different approaches, and defending against them all would be impossible. Deborah Tannen, in her well-known work on gender and communication differences (see Tannen, 1990), suggests that compared to men, women practice more “rapport-talk,” in which their objective is to establish connections and negotiate the relationship, while, compared to women, men practice more “report-talk” in order to preserve status differences in some form of a hierarchical social order. Cialdini (2001) points out that it would be useless to try to prevent yourself from liking others. Rather, you should let the liking occur and then explore why you like the other person. If you find that you like the person more than you would typically like another person under similar circumstances, then it is time to be wary. Separating liking the other party from an evaluation of the deal should be enough to moderate the influence of the liking principle in your negotiations.

**4. Helping the Other Party** There are many ways one party can help the other party in a negotiation: by doing a favor, allowing extra time, providing confidential information, complying with a request, or helping with a constituency. Negotiators can help the other party avoid being caught by surprise. For example, an automobile salesperson may say to the customer, “In a moment I’m going to take you in to talk to the sales manager about the amount we are going to allow on your present car. You may hear me say some unfavorable things about your car. Don’t let that bother you—we’ll still get the figure you and I agreed on.” By “helping” you with his manager, the salesperson hopes you will help him by buying a new car from him. In another example, during negotiations on the sale of a large parcel of land to a major corporation, the seller privately told the company executive handling the negotiation about a forthcoming zoning change that would benefit the company. The executive got the credit for uncovering this inside information, and the seller was not materially affected one way or the other by sharing it (but got the deal).

**5. Perceived Similarity** When meeting for the first time, people often try to find something they have in common. Perhaps they attended the same school, grew up in the same neighborhood, or have friends in common. The basic idea that we like those who are like us—known as the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1971)—is among the most robust and reliable findings in social psychology (e.g., Machinov and Monteil, 2002). (An alternative view—the dissimilarity-repulsion hypothesis [Rosenbaum, 1986]—is that we dislike those who are different, rather than liking those who are similar.) In a two-party

Does the expression of emotion actually affect negotiation processes and outcomes? In one study, Keith Allred and his colleagues (Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, and Raia, 1997) examined whether the expression of anger and compassion would exert influence on negotiation by affecting how the parties feel about each other, the outcomes each derived individually, and the amount of joint gain. The researchers found that expressing high anger and low compassion led negotiators to have less desire to work together in the future and to achieve fewer

joint gains, but did not affect the ability of individual negotiators to reap greater gains for themselves. This was one of the first in a growing body of research studies examining the role of emotional expression and understanding within the negotiation process.

*Source:* Adapted from K. G. Allred, J. S. Mallozzi, F. Matsui, and C. P. Raia, "The Influence of Anger and Compassion on Negotiation Performance," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 70 (1997), pp. 175–87.

exchange such as a negotiation, the more similarities they find, the more bonds they establish, the better both parties feel, and the more receptive they will be to each other's messages and efforts at persuasion (Oldmeadow, Platow, Foddy, and Anderson, 2003). A useful negotiating tactic, therefore, is to identify and discuss experiences, characteristics, and opinions you hold in common with the other party. If you see pictures of a yacht on an office wall, you might mention your own interest in sailing. The other party's winter suntan might cue you to mention your own trips to the tropics or the ski slopes. But if it is to your advantage to find and explore commonalities in experience, attitude, and background with the other party, it is also to your disadvantage to highlight those areas where you differ. There is no point to starting a conversation on a politically controversial topic when you know or suspect that the other holds a different view.

**6. Emotion** We discussed emotion earlier in this chapter in connection with the use of language to construct a message, but emotion can also be a source factor. Emotion combined with persistence leads to assertiveness and determination. Used effectively, emotion may enhance a message source's attractiveness by instilling in listeners the belief that the speaker holds appealing deep-seated values (this may also enhance the speaker's credibility).

As we discussed in Chapter 5, expressions of fear, anger, or enthusiasm can become an integral part of negotiations—particularly over issues about which you feel strongly (see Box 8.2). Emotion can be powerful because it offers a stark contrast to the expectation that negotiation is a cool, calm, rational exchange of information, driven by logical analysis of outcome maximization and economic valuation of alternatives. Yet negotiators frequently do not behave according to the principles of logic and economic rationality. In addition, when everyone else is being rational, it is frequently the person who expresses strong feelings, gets angry, or makes an impassioned speech in favor of a proposed solution who carries the day (Henderson, 1973). Union organizers, charismatic politicians, leaders of social movements, evangelists, and others whose aim is to organize and mobilize supporters all understand the importance of arousing emotion through their appeals.

An important aspect of the role of emotion in influence and negotiation is being aware that not everyone will respond to emotional appeals in the same way. Research (DeSteno, Petty, Rucker, Wegener, and Braverman, 2004) suggests that the use of emotion as a source of influence is most effective when the emotional overtones of the message match the

receiver's emotional state. This study showed that individuals who were sad were most influenced by a message that conveyed sadness; likewise angry individuals were best influenced by an angry message. Another study linked receptivity to emotional arguments with personality traits. In this research (Haddock, Maio, Arnold, and Huskinson, 2008), people who are dispositionally oriented more toward cognitive rather than emotional processing were more receptive to cognitive (informational) arguments; others who by nature are more in need of emotionality were more receptive to emotional arguments.

Finally, be careful not to assume that your arguments will be better received if your target is in a good mood. Many influence-seekers probably figure it will help to put a listener in a good mood (maybe tell a joke or make a light-hearted comment), and then make the pitch. It sounds reasonable, but research shows that the connection between moods and receptivity to arguments is more complicated. Several studies have shown that people in a happy mood are less likely to scrutinize the content of an argument, whereas people in a negative mood are more likely to do so (Hullett, 2005 synthesizes this research literature). Accordingly, as Hullett observes, "attitude change resulting from strong arguments may be best accomplished when targeting people in bad moods" (p. 439). Solid arguments directed at "happy" people are likely to work when the (happy) person is already disposed to like or agree with the argument, but if you want your listener to truly scrutinize your message and be persuaded, putting them in a good mood beforehand is not necessary a successful strategy.

**Authority** The principle of authority is quite simple: people with authority have more influence than those without authority. Researchers have long been interested in the effects of authority figures on human behavior. Stanley Milgram's (1974) classic studies of obedience to authority suggest that people will go to great lengths when their behavior is legitimized by an authority figure. Most people will obey the orders of a person wearing a uniform, even if there is no war or apparent emergency. This, too, is an effect of the principle of authority.

In negotiation, the principle of authority can be used in many ways. Cialdini (2001) observes that the use of a title, such as *doctor* or *professor*, gives the user more authority and thus more influence. A friend of one of the authors uses the title *doctor* whenever ordering airline tickets. He found out early in his career that airlines would telephone doctors when there was a flight delay but would ignore the other passengers. This simple illustration shows the esteem with which some titles (or positions) are held in society. Cialdini also suggests that authority is more than position; it can further lead to attributions of expertise. He tells the story of a waiter who, regardless of what patrons order, recommends something else on the menu that is cheaper because the original dish "is not as good tonight as it normally is" (pp. 198–99). In doing so, the waiter establishes his authority for later (more expensive) advice about the meal, such as expensive desserts (and perhaps also induces diners to reciprocate his generous advice when it's time to leave a tip).

Authority can take different forms and yield different outcomes. Researchers have distinguished between two broad uses of authority in influence-seeking: (1) authority based on one's personal expertise or credibility and (2) authority based on a person's legitimate position in an existing social hierarchy (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). The first form—expertise—has been labeled a "soft" influence tactic, whereas the second form—authority derived from one's position—is a "harsh" tactic (Koslowsky, Schwarzwald, and Ashuri, 2001). Koslowsky and colleagues, in a field study of influence behavior among nurses and

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their supervisors, found that subordinates' compliance with requests and job satisfaction were higher when supervisors relied more on the use of soft tactics. These findings seem to suggest that establishing your personal expertise is preferred to highlighting differences in positional power, especially if the goal is not just simple short-term compliance, but longer term relational benefits as well.

Cialdini (2001, p. 197) offers the following advice for dealing with authority figures who may have influence over you. Ask two questions: "Is this authority truly an expert?" and "How truthful can you expect this expert to be?" The first question forces you to verify that the person really does have expertise in the situation and not just the appearance (title, attire) of expertise. The second question brings into focus the motive of the alleged authority. If someone, like the waiter just described, gives you some negative information before another suggestion, he or she may in fact be manipulating you into thinking that he or she is honest when this is not the case.

### Aspects of Context That Foster Peripheral Influence

Finally, we explore aspects of the situation beyond the message itself and the sender of the message that create opportunities to pursue the peripheral route to influence. Five strategies are discussed: reciprocity, commitment, social proof, scarcity, and reward and punishment.

**Reciprocity** The norm of *reciprocity* has been studied for years by philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists. This norm suggests that when you receive something from another person, you should respond in the future with a favor in return. This norm is thought to be pan-cultural in that groups around the world appear to respect it (Gouldner, 1960). We alluded to the reciprocity norm in the previous section when discussing personal attractiveness of sources and some receiver factors.

The norm of reciprocity plays an important role in negotiations. Negotiators give concessions and expect concessions in return. When they treat the other party politely, they expect a corresponding politeness. The norm can also be used to obtain compliance from another negotiator. For instance, Negotiator A does a small favor for Negotiator B and later

asks for a larger favor from B in return. The net advantage goes to A. Although one may think that the norm of reciprocity should apply only to favors of the same size, this does not appear to be the case. In fact, many sales pitches rely on giving the consumer a small gift early in an exchange and then asking for a large concession from the consumer later. In parts of Africa, particularly Nigeria, there is a custom of giving a small gift, called *dash*, to a potential customer soon after he or she has walked into a shop—before there has ever been a chance to identify the customer's needs. The shopkeeper will claim, legitimately, that it is a gift, no strings, yours to keep even if you turn and walk out of the shop at this minute. However, knowing human nature, the shopkeeper does not really expect this to happen and is rarely disappointed. The shopkeeper knows that people like to receive gifts and will develop positive feelings toward those who give them. Those who leave without buying often give the gift back, even though they know it is “free.”

Similar opportunities exist in other negotiation situations. A compliment, such as a reference to the other party's positive behavior in a prior discussion, will make that person feel good and set the scene for him or her to act positively. Giving a quick concession on an issue that the other party wants will both please that party and create the implicit obligation for him or her to do the same. Too often negotiators begin by holding every advantage close to their chest and giving things away grudgingly, believing that this is the best way to succeed. Such rigid behavior is no more likely to lead to graceful and successful negotiation than it is to graceful and successful acting or public speaking. Flexibility and adaptability are necessary in all three.

Given the apparent powerfulness of the norm of reciprocity, how can the negotiator counter its effects? One possibility is to refuse all favors in a negotiation setting, but this would probably cause more problems than it resolves. For instance, refusing a cup of coffee from your host may remove the effects of the norm of reciprocity but at the same time may insult the host, especially if five minutes later you go out to get a cup of coffee yourself. Perhaps the other person was simply being polite. Perhaps he or she was setting a positive tone for the meeting. Or perhaps he or she was trying to use the norm of reciprocity to create a small sense of indebtedness.<sup>7</sup>

How should the negotiator respond to such favors? Cialdini (2001) suggests that you should respond politely to a favor and accept what is offered if it is something you want. If it becomes apparent that the favor was an attempt at manipulation, however, then you should redefine the event as a trick rather than a favor. This will remove the obligation of the rule of reciprocity because the “rule says that favors are to be met with favors; it does not require that tricks be met with favors” (Cialdini, 2001, p. 47).

**Commitment** Researchers have long recognized that once people have decided something, they can be remarkably persistent in their beliefs. This process has been labeled *commitment* to a position, and it relies heavily on the common need that people have to appear consistent, both to themselves and to others. Most people are familiar with the bait-and-switch sales technique. Unscrupulous organizations advertise merchandise for sale at an incredibly low price but “run out” of stock by the time you arrive at the store. They then try to sell you alternate merchandise at a higher price. Why does this technique work? One reason is that once you have made the decision to purchase a product (a commitment), you almost automatically follow through with the commitment (even at a higher price). Thus, if you

In his youth, one of the authors of this book decided to purchase a used MG sports car. He tells this story:

After searching the city where I lived and finding only one car within my price range (\$2,400), I test-drove the car, discussed the price with the salesman, made an offer to buy the car, completed most of the paperwork, was loaned the car overnight, and came back to sign the deal the next day. At this time the salesman embarrassedly told me that he was unaware the car had “electric overdrive” until his manager had told him, and that he could not sell the car for the agreed-on price. Rather, the salesman would have to charge an additional \$350 for the overdrive. Of course, he would allow me to change my mind and not buy the car. I bought the car, but after driving away I was convinced that the salesman’s bargaining strategy had been a manipulation to induce compliance. I could have confronted the dealer, but there was no proof that the dealer was dishonest (and who would believe a young consumer versus an established car dealer?). The consequences of this decision cost the dealership much more than the extra \$350 it received for

the car. I told many of my friends to stay away from the dealer because of the way he did business. I didn’t have any repairs done at the dealer after the warranty on the car expired.

If you think that an honest mistake occurred and the salesman really had forgotten the overdrive, his behavior during the warranty period should convince you that wasn’t the case. The only repair needed under warranty was to replace the tachometer. The warranty stated that the dealer would pay for the parts and 50 percent of the labor. The salesman told me that replacing the tachometer in an MG was very difficult: the dashboard had to be removed, and many pieces under the dashboard had to be removed in order to pass the wires. He advised me that it would take six hours to install the part and suggested that I leave the car with them for the day. I didn’t believe a word the salesman said. I diligently followed the mechanic around the car until he went into the service manager’s office for a brief discussion. When he returned he replaced the tachometer in 15 minutes. After paying for half of the labor cost, I drove away, never to return!

went to the store to buy the product at the fantastic sale price of \$49.95, you will be more likely to buy the alternative product at \$64.95, even though that price may never have gotten you to the store in the first place. (See Box 8.3 for a cautionary tale involving commitment to the purchase of a car.)

Commitment strategies are very powerful devices for making people comply. One way to increase commitment is to write things down. Cialdini (2001) notes that encyclopedia companies that have customers complete their own order forms have a far lower cancellation rate than those companies that have salespeople write out the form. Why? Writing it themselves seems to increase the commitment that the customers feel. It is as if they say to themselves, “I wouldn’t have written it down if I didn’t want it, would I?” Many consumer-product companies have people write testimonials about their products in order to enter a drawing for a prize. Why? Apparently, writing testimonials increases the commitment to buy the product (Cialdini, 2001). Research has shown that even signing a petition can increase your compliance with a request to do something more intrusive several days later (Freedman and Fraser, 1966). Researchers have called this the foot-in-the-door technique (Clark, 1984).

How can commitment work in a negotiation? Usually, it is incremental. Agreement to innocuous statements early in the negotiation may be used as a foundation for further and further concessions. Frequently, our own words and behaviors are used to extract further

concessions. In the car example in Box 8.3, the buyer was more than pleased to pay the extra \$350 because in the drive-around period, he had shown the car to many friends and told them about the purchase. Because the salesman had been nice enough to let the buyer take the car overnight even before signing a contract, the only fair thing to do was to let the salesman off the hook for his mistake by paying \$350 more!

Commitment strategies are difficult to combat. Frequently, one will have already been influenced and agreed to something before even realizing that manipulation has taken place. To some extent, being forewarned about these techniques is being forearmed. Cialdini (2001) suggests that your body will send two types of warning signals when these techniques are in use. Either you will feel uncomfortable when subtle commitments are being made, or something in the deal will just not seem quite right. If you encounter these thoughts or feelings when negotiating, look out for use of a commitment strategy by the other party. At the very least, be aware of all the agreements you strike during a negotiation, even those small, innocuous ones. They may be the setup for the next move.

**Social Proof** The principle of *social proof* suggests that people look to others to determine the correct response in many situations. This principle suggests that people often behave in certain ways because everyone else is doing so. Cialdini (2001) identifies this as the principle that makes laugh tracks effective on television comedies (see Fuller and Sheehy-Skeffington, 1974). It also explains why marketers like to allude to previously satisfied customers; if other people used the product and liked it, then it must be good. Celebrities are hired to endorse products for similar reasons.

In negotiation situations, the principle of social proof can act as a powerful influence strategy. Salespeople will show lists of happy customers, knowing that few people will take the time to verify the list. (“If it wasn’t true, why would the salesperson show me the list?”) Sweepstakes advertisements highlight previous winners and feature celebrities. Negotiators will talk about how popular their new product is and how sales have really increased this year. Real estate agents will be sure that you are aware that many other people are interested in the house that you are considering buying (see Fishbein and Azjen, 1975).

The principle of social proof works because questionable information (“everyone thinks this product is good”) is given weight in decisions. Cialdini (2001) suggests that the way to dilute its effectiveness is to identify the false information and give it the weight it deserves. In negotiations, this means careful preparation and being aware of “facts” about the others’ advocated views that do not seem to match your preparation. When the other party offers “evidence” about the popularity of an item, do not automatically trust that the other party is being completely honest; rather, ask the other to substantiate the claims. Even when there is a shortage of an item, be sure that you are behaving in your own best interests. Frequently, a planned delay (“let me sleep on it”) will be enough to separate the influence of social proof from your own needs and interests.

**Scarcity** The principle of *scarcity* suggests that when things are less available, they will have more influence. Cialdini (2001) describes how common sales strategies rely on the scarcity principle. Frequently, salespeople will tell customers that they are not sure if the product the customers would like to purchase is currently in stock. Before making the trip to the stockroom they ask if they should grab one before another salesperson gets it. Typically

shoppers will say yes and will feel relieved (or lucky) when the salesperson returns with the “last one” in the store. This is the scarcity principle at work; people are easier to influence when they feel that they are obtaining a scarce resource.

In negotiation situations, the scarcity influence strategy may be operating whenever there appears to be a great demand for a product. Some organizations deliberately keep their products in short supply to give the appearance that they are very widely sought (e.g., popular Christmas toys). Car dealers suggest that you not wait too long before deciding on the color car you want because they have very few cars left and they are selling fast. Any time negotiators talk about “exclusive opportunities” and “time-limited offers,” they are using the scarcity principle. Censorship also results in scarcity; banning a specific book in the library is guaranteed to increase the demand for it. (See Brehm, 1976, for further discussion of this phenomenon, known as *psychological reactance*.) Finally, auctions also rely on the principle of scarcity by selling unique (one-of-a-kind) pieces to the highest bidder—the more scarce the item, the higher the bids.

The scarcity principle is difficult to combat when used effectively. It creates in the victim an activity trap focused on obtaining the item and effectively suspends cognitive evaluation of the broader situation (Cialdini, 2001). Cialdini suggests that people need to be aware of the emotional trappings that this principle arouses; when confronted with a strong emotional response to obtain a scarce good, they should carefully evaluate their reasons for wanting the item in the first place.

**Use of Reward and Punishment** In Chapter 7, we indicated that control over resources was a strong source of power. These resources can be used in at least two major ways. First, negotiators can use *exchange*—the process of offering resources or favors (promises and assistance) to secure the other’s compliance and cooperation. Exchange is clearly a close cousin of bargaining in that the user either directly or implicitly suggests reciprocity—in short, “If I do X for you, will you do Y for me?” Exchange relies on resources as the power base, particularly resources that can be translated into rewards for the other—favors, benefits, incentives, treats, perks, and the like. Thus, exchange frequently invokes the use of promises and commitments as persuasive tools—obligations that you are willing to make in exchange for the other’s cooperation, compliance, or commitment to give you what you want. Finally, exchange transactions are often negotiated so that the other party completes his or her obligation now, but chooses not to ask you to complete your obligation until some point in the future, either defined or undefined. By doing so, you and the other party leave a series of chits or obligations out in your interpersonal marketplace, which you can call back in when you need them.

In his studies of successful managers and their use of power in organizations, Kotter (1977) emphasizes that a manager must recognize, create, and cultivate dependence among those around her—subordinates, peers, and even superiors—and convert these dependencies into obligations. Obligations may be created in several ways. Doing favors for people, recognizing and praising them for their accomplishments, helping people out, paying individual attention to them even when the job demands do not require it or they do not expect it, and dispensing extra funds for special projects in a tight-budget year are but a few examples of how resources can be controlled and measured to help people do their jobs better and to generate liking for the power holder.

A second way that negotiators attempt to use this power is through pressure—that is, by the threat of punishment. An influencer can make demands, suggest consequences about what will happen if the demands are not met, engage in frequent surveillance to determine whether the demands are carried out, remind the other person frequently about what is expected, and eventually follow through with the actual punishment if the demand is not met on time. A sales manager may cut a salesperson's pay for repeatedly failing to achieve sales target projections. A parent may deny a child television privileges for a week because she didn't clean up her room. A supplier may put a late charge on an overdue bill to a customer. Like rewards and the use of praise, coercion, or punishment can be as effective in the verbal form as in the withdrawal or denial of tangible resources. If the sales manager berates a salesperson for failing to make target sales quotas (rather than firing him or her), or if the parent yells at his child rather than denying television privileges, the impact may be just as great.

The conditions for the use of pressure are similar to those for the use of exchange and praise: the other party is dependent on the power holder in some way, the agent controls some form of resources that can be denied or taken away from the other party, and the punishment can be administered in a manner that will ensure the other party's compliance. According to Kipnis (1976, p. 104), one is better off with praise and rewards if the goal is to maintain the target's good will; criticism and sanctions are more appropriate when changing behavior is more important than maintaining goodwill.

The few empirical studies of power use in negotiation have found that, compared with those with low power, parties with high power tend to use more pressure tactics, such as threats, and make fewer concessions (Hornstein, 1965; Michener, Vaske, Schleiffer, Plazewski, and Chapman, 1975). When the power distribution between the parties was relatively small, the low-power party also showed a high degree of threat use and power tactics, creating an escalation between the parties that usually destroyed the negotiation (see also Vitz and Kite, 1970). There is also evidence that the use of power tactics varies cross-culturally. Tinsley (2001) found that negotiators from cultures that place a higher value on social hierarchy (Japanese, in this study) were more likely to use power tactics than negotiators from cultures having a greater emphasis on egalitarianism in society (Germans and Americans).

Pressure tactics produce, at best, short-term compliance with requests, but they also are likely to elicit resistance from the other party. Frequent use of pressure tactics alienates the other party and leads to very high resistance, in which case the agent must consistently escalate the severity of consequences for noncompliance and the willingness to invoke them. Pressure tactics should be used selectively and sparingly because their use is likely to corrode the relationship between the parties, and frequent use is likely to destroy it.

## Section Summary

In this section, we examined several ways that persuaders can use the peripheral route to achieve influence. We discussed factors related to the message itself, characteristics of the message source, and aspects of the influence context that can result in influence. That last piece—context—is especially important because it complicates the influence situation, requiring the effective influence seeker to attend to additional social factors beyond just his or her relationship with the individual influence target. An example is the added complexity involved in seeking influence as part of negotiations that occur in large organizational settings (see Box 8.4).

Michael Watkins (2001) discussed how influence operates when it occurs in the specific context of large organizations. He offered five key goals for effective persuasion in these settings:

1. *Mapping the influence landscape.* It is important to pinpoint who needs to be persuaded and what methods to employ to effectively influence the other party. Within an organization or social network, it is important to attend not just to the target of influence, but also to subgroups or coalitions that support the target. This also involves neutralizing opposition to your position.
2. *Shaping perceptions of interest.* An influencer can use framing techniques and persuasive strategies to influence others' beliefs about what they want. Successful persuasion can change a person's incentives in the negotiation, therefore facilitating desired outcomes. Compensation plans, mission statements, strategic plans, annual budgets, and the like are powerful media for influencing incentives in an organization.
3. *Shaping perceptions of alternatives.* Influencing another's perceptions of alternatives
4. *Gaining acceptance for tough decisions.* It is important to lay a framework within the organization for the acceptance of difficult decisions and their outcomes. When members of an organization feel involved in the decision-making process and perceive that process as fair, they are more likely to accept tough decisions.
5. *Persuading at a distance.* Because organizations are large and it is impossible to persuade one-on-one with all members, it is important to be able to persuade from a distance. Establishing reliable channels of communication, communicating important themes and messages through speeches and memos, and learning how to appropriately and creatively communicate an idea are important for mass persuasion in an organization.

Source: Adapted from M. Watkins, "Principles of Persuasion." *Negotiation Journal* 17 (2001), pp. 115–37.

Influence targets are particularly susceptible to peripheral forms of influence to the extent that they are unmotivated and/or unable to pay careful attention to the argumentative substance of the influence-seeker's message. Effective negotiators realize that a big part of their task is persuading the other party to view the situation as they do. Strategies that underlie peripheral routes to influence are an important part of a negotiator's arsenal for doing just that.

### The Role of Receivers—Targets of Influence

We close this chapter with a discussion of the person who is the target of influence. Influence targets should not think of themselves as passive recipients who merely "consume" a persuasive message and then make an up-or-down decision whether to "buy" it or not. There are two prominent aspects to the influence target's role and options. First, targets should avoid becoming defensive and direct their energy instead toward ways to gain a great understanding of the goals and interests driving the other party's influence attempts. Second, there are a number of ways that negotiators who finds themselves on the receiving end of persuasive messages and strategies can resist the attempts at influence. We discuss each of these two aspects of the target's role in turn.



*“No, Thursday’s out. How about never—  
is never good for you?”*

### Understanding the Other’s Perspective

Negotiators on the receiving end of influence-seeking gambits will be much better equipped to make sound decisions about whether or not to be persuaded—and less likely to dig in and become defensive—if they have a through and nuanced understanding of where the other party is coming from. We present here three suggestions for achieving that kind of understanding.

**1. Explore the Other’s Point of View** Negotiators frequently give very little attention to the other party’s opinions and point of view. This is unfortunate because it is very much to your advantage to understand what the other party really wants, how things look to him, and how he developed his position. One can explore the other party’s perspective with questions designed to reveal his or her needs and interests. For instance, “Why are those important objectives for you?” “What would happen if you did not get everything you have asked for?” and “Have your needs changed since the last time we talked?” bring out more detailed information about the other party’s position and interests. Exploring the other person’s outlook not only provides more information, which can lead you to design solutions to meet both sides’ needs, but helps you understand why the other party is trying to persuade you to think or act in a particular way. Be careful though of questions that attack rather than explore. Questions such as “How in the world can you say that?” and “Who in their right mind would believe that?” are likely to make the other party feel tense and defensive, turning the tone of the negotiation quite negative. (Recall from Chapter 6 our discussion and numerous examples of the use of questions in negotiations.)

**2. Selectively Paraphrase** Paraphrasing ensures that both parties have understood each other accurately. If you haven't understood the other party, it gives her an opportunity to correct you. It is important to restate your understanding after being corrected, to make sure you have gotten it right. In addition, vocalizing the other person's ideas helps you remember them better than simply hearing them. Avoid literally repeating the other person's words; restate the message in your own words, starting with "Let me see if I understand the point you just made." When people have an important message to get across, they may talk vigorously and at length, often emphasizing the same point over and over. Once your paraphrasing indicates that the other person has been understood, he or she will usually stop repeating the same point and move on; hence, paraphrasing can be very helpful in moving a discussion forward.

You can also ask the other party to restate or paraphrase what you have said. You might say, "What I have said is very important to me, and I would appreciate it if you could restate what you understood to be my main points." This process accomplishes several things. First, it asks the other party to listen closely and recall what you have said. Second, it gives you the opportunity to check out the accuracy of his or her understanding. Third, it emphasizes the most important points of your presentation.

**3. Reinforce Points You Like in the Other Party's Proposals** Negotiators are frequently ineffective because they respond only to what they dislike in the other party's statement or proposal and ignore the things they like. Responding in this way ignores a powerful means of shaping and guiding what the other party is saying. Several classical theories of behavior (e.g., exchange theory or learning and reinforcement theory) make the same basic point: people are more likely to repeat behavior that is rewarded than behavior that is not rewarded (Homans, 1961; Skinner, 1953).

The simplest way to reward people for what they say during a negotiation is to acknowledge and support a point they have made: "That's an interesting point," or "I hadn't heard that before." Nonverbal signals work as well—for example, a simple "mm-hmm" or a nod of the head. Statements and actions like these separate a key statement from other points the speaker has made. Second, compliment speakers when they make points you want emphasized, and express appreciation to them for considering your interests and needs. In a labor negotiation, for example, management might say to the union, "Your concern that toxic labor relations might make customers reluctant to give us long-term contracts is an important one." A third approach is to separate parts of a statement that you like from those parts you don't like, and encourage the other party to develop the favorable points. In negotiating the sale of a house, the buyer might say, "Let me focus on one of the points you made. An adjustment in price to cover needed repairs is a good idea. What repairs do you have in mind?"

## Resisting the Other's Influence

In addition to the variety of things a negotiator can do to encourage, support, or direct the other's communication, there are three major things that listeners can do to resist the other's influence efforts: have good alternatives to a negotiated agreement, make a public commitment (or get the other party to make one), and inoculate yourself against the other's persuasive message.

**1. Have a BATNA, and Know How to Use It** Several authors identify a BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement) as a source of power (e.g., Pinkley, Neale, and Bennett,

1994; BATNAs were also described in Chapters 2, 4, and 7). There is no question that having a good BATNA enables a negotiator to walk away from a given negotiation, because it means that she can get her needs met and interests addressed somewhere else. Of course, a BATNA is a source of leverage at the negotiation table only if the other party is aware of it. To use a BATNA effectively, a negotiator must assess the other party's awareness that it exists and, if necessary, share that fact. This often must be done deftly—conveying the existence of a good alternative could be interpreted by the other party as an imminent threat to walk away. Keep in mind also that a BATNA can always be improved. Good negotiators will work to improve their BATNA before and even during an ongoing negotiation as a way to enhance their leverage. (We addressed the power of a BATNA in detail in Chapters 2 and 7.)

**2. Make a Public Commitment** One of the most effective ways to get someone to stand firm on a position is to have him make a public commitment to that position. Union leaders have said to their rank and file such things as, “I will resign before I settle for a penny less than . . .” After making that statement, the union leader faces several pressures. One is the potential loss of face with union members that would come with backing away from that position—the leader may be unceremoniously thrown out of office if he or she does not actually resign. A second pressure is the threat to the leader's credibility with management in the future if there is no follow-through on the commitment. Finally, the leader may have his or her own cognitive inconsistency to deal with because failing to resign will be inconsistent with the earlier commitment.

Sometimes negotiators want the other party to make a public commitment, but not always. If you can get the other party to make a public statement that supports something you want, that party will be hard-pressed not to stand by the statement, even though he or she may have a desire to abandon it later on. Sometimes negotiators make a statement such as “I'm committed to finding an agreement that we can both benefit from,” and then invite the other party to make a similar statement. At other times the inviting statement may be more direct: “Are you interested in selling us this property or not?” or “Let's agree that we are going to work together, and then get busy on the details of how to make it happen.” Even better than eliciting statements of commitment to a point of view is enticing the other party to make a behavioral commitment. For example, retail merchants use down payments and layaway plans to get a behavioral commitment from customers when it is not possible to complete the total sale at that time. On the other hand, at times negotiators will want to prevent the other party from making public commitments to positions that might interfere with reaching an agreement. The other party may later need to back off the commitment to complete a deal. Although it might be tempting to taunt or scold the other party for making a commitment that cannot be kept, a savvy negotiator will realize that it may be in his or her interest to help the other party escape an ill-advised commitment in a face-saving way. This can be done by downplaying statements of commitment, not responding to them, or looking for a rationale to explain why the commitment no longer applies given changing assumptions or circumstances.

**3. Inoculate Yourself against the Other Party's Arguments** One of the likely outcomes of listening carefully to the other party and exploring and understanding his or her point of view is that negotiators may change some of their own positions. At times they may not want to change their position, and therefore they may want to “inoculate” themselves against the

other party's arguments (Pfau, Szabo, Anderson, Morrill, Zubric, and Wan, 2001). For instance, managers who must support organizational policies with which they disagree may want to inoculate themselves against subordinates' arguments by preparing and rehearsing counterarguments that can be used to refute the key points the other is likely to make.

There are three approaches for inoculating against the arguments of other parties:

1. Prepare supporting arguments *for your position only*.
2. Develop arguments *against your position only*, and then develop counterarguments; that is, find ways to refute them in the points you make.
3. Develop arguments *both for your original position and against your position*, and then develop counterarguments to refute both (a combination approach).

To illustrate, let's take the example of a director of admissions for a graduate program who will be meeting with an applicant to explain the school's decision not to accept the applicant. The admissions director could (1) develop arguments about why the student should not be admitted (e.g., the student's grades are not high enough), (2) develop arguments in favor of the student's perspective (e.g., the student took difficult courses at a very scholarly university), and (3) develop counterarguments to refute the student's arguments (e.g., the quality of the university and the rigor of the courses were taken into account when the admissions decision was made).

Research reveals that the best way to inoculate against being influenced is to use the combination approach (point 3)—developing arguments both for and against your position, and counterarguments to refute them (McGuire, 1964; Pfau et al., 2001). Developing arguments against your position only plus counterarguments (point 2) is also effective, but to a lesser extent. The least effective, by a large margin, is the first approach—developing arguments in support of your position only. Three further points emerge from research on inoculation. First, the best way to inoculate people against attacks on their position is to involve them in developing a defense. Second, the larger the number of arguments in any defense, the more effective it becomes. Third, asking people to make public statements supporting their original position increases their resistance to counterarguments.

### Section Summary

Negotiators in the role of listener or target of influence can do many things to help blunt the persuasive force of an influence-seeking message that originates with the other party. By exploring the influence seeker's point of view, challenging the arguments set forth, and taking steps to actively resist the influence attempt, negotiators can minimize the chance that they will be swayed by weak arguments or "trapped" into the kind of shortcut persuasion that occurs through the peripheral route. Some key elements of resistance include making wise decisions about how and when to wield one's BATNA, knowing when to make public commitments, and inoculating oneself against anticipated arguments. In many situations, the other party will be persuasive because his or her arguments are solid and sensible. The key is approaching influence attempts with a focused and critical mind so that one is persuaded only when the arguments merit it. Understanding how persuasion works is certainly an essential step in becoming prepared to defend yourself against influence attempts across the negotiation table (Malhotra and Bazerman, 2008).

## Chapter Summary

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In this chapter, we discussed a large number of mechanisms of influence that one could use in negotiation. These tools were considered in two broad categories: influence that occurs through the “central route” to persuasion and influence that occurs through the “peripheral route” to persuasion. With respect to the central route, we addressed the content of the message, how messages are structured, and the style with which a persuasive message is delivered. Influence that occurs through the central route is likely to be relatively enduring and resistant to counterinfluence. With respect to the peripheral route, we considered tactics related to the construction of the message itself, as well as characteristics of the message source and elements of the influence context. When influence occurs through the peripheral route, the target may comply but will not necessarily make a corresponding attitudinal commitment; moreover, that compliance may be short-lived, and the target is generally more susceptible to counterinfluence.

In the last major section of the chapter, we considered how the receiver—the target of influence—can avoid being unduly persuaded by exploring the needs and interests of the other party or by resisting the persuasive effects of the message. Effective negotiators are skilled not only at crafting persuasive messages, but also at playing the role of skilled “consumers” of the messages that others direct their way.

We close with a cautionary note. This chapter has only touched on some of the more important and well-documented aspects of influence-seeking communication that can be used in bargaining. Negotiators usually spend a great deal of time devising ways to support and document their positions; they devote less time to considering how the information is presented or how to use qualities of the source and receiver to increase the likelihood that persuasion will be successful. Careful attention to source, target, and context factors, rather than just to message factors, is likely to have a positive impact on negotiator effectiveness.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See also Chaiken (1987).

<sup>2</sup> Researchers have disagreed as to whether the two routes to persuasion are separate systems (e.g., Petty and Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b) or compensatory systems (e.g., Chaiken, 1987). That is, it is not clear if the two routes to persuasion operate separately or if they work in conjunction. Some work (e.g., O’Keefe, 1990) seems to suggest that both processes operate at all times, but one is likely to be dominant. There is also disagreement about what to label the two routes and which research findings fit more precisely into which route. For sake of clarity, we have adopted Petty and Cacioppo’s labels for the two routes: central and peripheral. It is also difficult to summarize and apply some concepts of persuasion because of contradictory research findings and the complex relationships between variables. Despite these weaknesses, this model of persuasion is comprehensive and helps organize a great deal of conflicting research on persuasion. The model does not provide exact prescriptions about how to persuade everyone in all circumstances. It does provide a clear way to think about the variables that have

been found to influence persuasion. It helps clarify when persuasive tactics can work, although this does not mean that these factors will work in all circumstances. In many situations, influence is achieved through a skillful blend of many persuasive techniques.

<sup>3</sup> See also Freedman and Fraser (1966); Seligman, Bush, and Kirsch (1976).

<sup>4</sup> See also Bem (1972).

<sup>5</sup> See also Hovland and Mandell (1952); McGuire (1964).

<sup>6</sup> See also Johnson and Eagly (1989); Petty and Cacioppo (1990).

<sup>7</sup> Note that many public-sector bargaining laws prohibit negotiators from buying even a cup of coffee for each other. Negotiators need to be aware of the laws and norms that may have implications for compliance strategies. In addition, there are cross-cultural differences in refusing a gift, and negotiators need to prepare carefully for such instances when they negotiate across borders. (See Chapter 16 for more discussion of culture and negotiation.)