THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

PERSUASION

The ability to convince others to change their actions, decisions, opinions, or thinking through communication.

LEADERS LEAD OTHERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY PERSUASION MATTERS

Persuasion is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG PERSUASION LOOKS LIKE

- You can see and speak from another person's point of view
- You understand objections and concerns, and respond to them effectively
- You gain support for your ideas rather than merely announcing them

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Persuasion matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF PERSUASION

THE DEFINITION

The ability to convince others to change their actions, decisions, opinions, or thinking through communication.

Like any skill worth mastering, Persuasion rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Ethos: credibility**

Getting the other person to accept you on an open, ready, and willing basis. Build trust and credibility before you attempt to promote a concept, product, or service.

2 **Pathos: emotional engagement**

People are rarely persuaded by facts alone. They want to feel comfortable with their decision and believe it reflects well on them. Close with emotion that stirs people to act.

3 **Logos: sound reasoning**

Presenting your idea so that it genuinely makes sense to the person, using logic and reason to challenge or reinforce their current assumptions and beliefs.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I am willing to use my influence to persuade others based on my convictions.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I intentionally build trust, rather than intimidate, coerce, or pull rank, as the foundation for persuasion.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

When seeking to persuade others, I use both carefully developed logic and passion or conviction.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I am transparent in persuading others, and I do not manipulate or use tricks to gain agreement.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I build my credibility with people before I ask them to accept an idea.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I understand the objections to my idea, and I address them directly rather than talking past them.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?*

SECTION 04

PERSUASION IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 45 min

Ask for Honest Feedback

Your persuasive effect is something only your audience can report on. Plan on three conversations.

TRY IT

1. Choose three people you trust at different levels: management, peers, employees.
2. Ask how they'd describe your persuasive skills, what you do well, and how you could improve.
3. Ask whether you seem assertive but not overbearing. Stay open, not defensive.

ACTIVITY 02 45 min

Practicing Persuasion

Eight questions that turn a conviction into an argument someone else can accept.

TRY IT

1. Define your audience, why they would agree, and why they could disagree.
2. Decide the best method for them, written document, face-to-face, and name your main point plus three supporting points.
3. Write why you believe in it and how others will benefit, then rehearse on someone who knows your organization.

ACTIVITY 03 30 min

Audit Your Credibility

Ethos comes first. People accept your idea only after they accept you.

TRY IT

1. For your next persuasive conversation, write what that person already knows about your track record.
2. Name one commitment you have kept with them, and one gap that could make them hesitate.
3. Decide how you will build trust before promoting the idea, and what you will say about the gap.

ACTIVITY 04 25 min

Write the Emotional Close

Sound reasoning opens the door. Emotion is what moves someone to act.

TRY IT

1. For an idea you're advocating, write what the person gains that they would be glad to tell others about.
2. Draft a two or three sentence close that appeals to that feeling rather than to the data.
3. Say it out loud, and cut anything that sounds like pressure instead of invitation.

ACTIVITY 05 30 min

Map the Barriers

Identify the social, emotional, economic, and practical reasons people won't agree, then address them.

TRY IT

1. For an idea you're advocating, list every barrier to agreement in those four categories.
2. For each, decide how you would address it directly.
3. Show how your concept worked in another setting or helped someone else achieve a goal.

ACTIVITY 06 20 min

Support Others First

People who have been supported by you are more willing to support you.

TRY IT

1. Identify someone whose idea or objective you could genuinely support this month.
2. Support it visibly, without linking it to anything you want.
3. Approach your next persuasive conversation treating that person as an ally, not an opponent.

SECTION 05

COMMON PERSUASION TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Doing all the talking**

Persuasion is not just talking. It involves as much or more listening and non-verbal communication than speech.

02 **Relying on facts alone**

People are rarely persuaded by reason by itself. Without emotional engagement, a sound argument still loses.

03 **Excessive role confidence**

Assuming others only need to hear what you think is important, the mark of insensitivity, closes the conversation before it starts.

04 **Manipulation instead of transparency**

Tricks and pressure may produce short-term compliance and permanent damage to your credibility.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Persuasion over the next 90 days?

1

2

3

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1

Q2

Q3

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Persuasion with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK

The Complete Leader, Ch. 3.7: Persuasion

The full framework and examples behind persuasion.

PODCAST

The Complete Leader Podcast

Episode 72 explores persuasion in practice.

ONLINE

Persuasion competency library

Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

> CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS
>
> *As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Persuasion?*

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Persuasion is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.