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HARNESS THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE'S MEDIA

Our Age of Anxiety is, in great part, the result of trying to do today's jobs with yesterday's tools.

The new media are not bridges between man and nature; they are nature.

— Marshall McLuhan

The fear of loss of control of the traditional mass media by the corporations that run them has less to do with the media than it does with their ability to control ideas. That control of ideas is where the profit is, not the medium through which the ideas are disseminated.

Traditional media have long been able to choose what and whose ideas best suited a public that looked to them as a source of all things new and interesting. The People's Media,

which includes blogs, online video, social networking sites, self-publishing, podcasting, and teleseminars, took away their death grip on the mind of the public at large and opened the doors for anyone to be a mass influencer. The balance of power is shifting, and as it does, the traditionalists scramble to find a way to regain control. They cling to what is left of their influence like a beggar clutches his rags against the winter's chill. Adaptation and emulation is their only chance for survival as the People's Media evolve at a superhuman pace.

THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE'S MEDIA

When average people discovered that they had the ability to share their ideas widely with just a few strokes of a keyboard and the click of a mouse, the balance of power began to change.

Before easy access to media, the consolidation of ideas and messages took much longer than it now requires. People had to spend a great deal of time focused on patiently spreading their message through whatever media they could get into; fads built over time. Today, fads can come and go in just a couple of months. Ideas are generated, shared, acted on, and abandoned in the amount of time it takes to mount a strong public relations campaign.

The People's Media are highly believable because no matter what your interest, you'll find large groups of people just like you eager to connect and share information. Once those people connect, they are a viable force that can influence large numbers of people quickly when they leverage their personal networks.

The People's Media are also believable because the information is coming from sources other than the sources which have long

since lost much of their credibility: the government, corporations, academia. Now, individuals who might have otherwise faced censorship are able to share infectious ideas, good or bad. If they understand the lessons of influence learned in traditional media, they can spread those messages rapidly, and develop a following of willing adherents.

INFLUENCE LESSONS FROM TRADITIONAL MEDIA

1. Information presented by a trusted source is accepted with little critical thinking: Traditional media spend large sums of money to create trusted newscasters, writers, and show hosts with whom you develop a relationship and trust. Once the relationship has developed, the consumer will accept whatever ideas are presented as being correct, even if she disagrees with the idea. As long as the host, newscaster, or reporter doesn't present the information as his own, if he presents it as an observer, the relationship continues safely and comfortably. If he occasionally challenges obviously bad ideas or lies, he gains even more trust and credibility.
 - The lesson for the subliminal persuader is to develop a following of people who look to you for their information and interpretation of events. Report and interpret ideas in ways that are congruent with the beliefs of your audience. Challenge the status quo, or if appropriate, support it, but build more interesting interpretations or allow access to people your audience wouldn't normally have access to. Slowly introduce new ideas once you've gained trust, and the ideas will be accepted.

2. Frequency is the key to creating long-term beliefs: The more people hear something from sources they trust, the faster they believe it. And, the more they hear it, the faster they spread it.
 - Frequency is a powerful subliminal persuader because people don't equate hearing something multiple times from multiple sources as an attempt to persuade; they simply see it as mounting evidence that something is true. It creates an internal sense of urgency and acceptance.
3. Sensationalism sells: The more controversial something is, the more it exposes something, the more it creates drama, the more people listen, watch, and read. There is a reason that people like Paris Hilton or Britney Spears "accidentally" expose themselves in public. It creates drama that the media need to get you interested. All good stories need an antagonist, drama, conflict, and resolution for it to be interesting. The more you lead with the raw sensational hook, the more likely you are to create awareness and to get people to talk about what you did.
 - Sensationalism persuades because it works on the most base of our emotions. It focuses on shock, surprise, anger, revulsion, or intense curiosity. Ask yourself where can you be a reporter in a firestorm? Can you enter the maelstrom and report on it for those who want to sit in the comfort of their home and read about it or watch your guerrilla video on YouTube? Sometimes the sensationalism only serves the purpose of connecting the people to you rather than creating your own drama that people can respond to. A current example of this kind

of sensationalism, which has raised awareness and ire and won great praise from the public (and a growing outrage by the legal community), is NBC's TV show "To Catch A Predator." The show focuses on catching child sexual predators in the act. But the real positive recipient of the attention is the web site pervertedjustice.com.

4. Conversation domination: Howie Schwartz was the first person I heard use this term in relationship to the People's Media, but it applies to traditional media as well. If you want to dominate a conversation and be the de facto leader, you create the conversation and you may even have the conversation with others whom you encourage or even develop into experts on the topic.

- When you dominate a conversation by creating the conversation in the first place, it is very easy to move ideas forward. The ideas are created by you and those you endorse or create, present your ideas and opinions as their own to create awareness. They are highly persuasive because the only place that people can learn about the conversation is from you or those you endorse. A commonly used tactic online is the use of an avatar. In Hindu mythology, an avatar is the descent of a deity to the earth in an incarnate form or some manifest shape, that is, the incarnation of a god. In online usage, an avatar is an assumed identity used to identify oneself or persona online. Avatars are widely used in online persuasion and often unethically in online manipulation. Used correctly, they are no more insidious than a pen name or a stage name.

Subliminal Sales Secret

If you want to persuade better in person or in your advertising, leverage the key principles of media persuasion. Create a persona, an expert who is the voice of the industry, the voice of reason, the voice of the future in your industry. Ensure that the voice is heard on a regular basis in multiple media to better spread the ideas that lead to support and purchase of your products, services, or ideas. Create controversy to speed up the awareness and the conversation. Controversy can come in many forms beyond outright argument. Controversy can be introducing ideas that are counter to currently held beliefs, expansive future views, revelations of weaknesses in the industry or best-of-class products (this can be done effectively by using an avatar).

By using these very powerful, time-tested techniques in person and in your advertising you'll quickly be able to own significant mindshare in your target audience.

A word of caution is in order here. Reputation management is a key element you need to concern yourself with when you use the traditional media influence tactics. You must be ethical and not create fire where none exists. If you expose yourself as a fraud, you'll be remembered for that faster and longer than any goodwill you create through careful and appropriate application of the principles.

Allow me to give you an example. Ben Mack and I were demonstrating this principle on Michel Fortin's Copywriters Board (copywritersboard.com). Rather than tell people first that we

were going to demonstrate the principle, we simply did it. Ben and I staged an argument on the board that got very heated and personal. Our goal was that someone who knew both of us would call us out on it and we'd reveal the technique. The process was very effective, it got hundreds of views in just a few days and many comments. But, we made two critical mistakes. First, we didn't tell the board leadership what we were doing; we wrongly assumed they'd understand. Second, we let it go too long without revealing the lesson. The result was that some people were offended. The value of the lesson was lost in the execution of the tactic because it was not fully thought out. Some people felt fooled by the whole thing and that made them very vocal in a not so positive way about us. In the end, everyone understood the lesson and the lesson that we learned and hopefully our reputations as helpers in the group overcame the angst. But, to some people, we'll always be the guys who played a dirty joke in a special group of people and they'll revile us for it.

Reputation management is a key to subliminal persuasion in the People's Media.

WHICH MEDIUM AND HOW?

When it comes to the People's Media, the choices advance every day, and certainly by the time you read this, it may have evolved new media not discussed here. That said, the key media that you can leverage today and for quite some time to come are:

Blogs

Online video

Social networks
Teleseminars
Podcasting
Self-publishing

Blogs

Blogs have become ubiquitous online and are one of the most potent tools for the subliminal persuader. The ease with which a blog can be created and populated with information makes them a first choice for creating influence using the People's Media. This is not a book on the technicalities of setting up a blog, but if you can type using Microsoft Word, you can set up a blog through wordpress.org (a free, open source web site) or typepad.com (a subscription-supported web site).

Search engines love blogs because of the recency and relevancy to searches. You'll often find that well-crafted blog posts will regularly show up in the top 10 organic search positions.

When people search online, they have a sense that they are in control of the information that they consume, and as a result, tend to believe more of what they find that resonates with them. What most don't realize is that mass influencers are very focused on understanding how searches occur so they can be sure that their messages show up where their potential audience searches.

There are several criteria for making blogs effective persuasion tools.

The first criterion is that the blog must be relevant to the target audience and the information must be current. There is a temptation to cover too much ground or too many varied issues in one blog to fill space. This is *always* the wrong idea

if you are trying to create a highly persuasive environment. The deeper into the topic you take someone, the more they become connected to you. There are two blogs that are phenomenal at leveraging this idea, sethgodin.typepad.com and micropersuasion.com. Study both of them to see how to become highly influential without seeming obvious. Of course, you'll want to study the blog associated with this book for even more detailed strategies and interviews with top subliminal influencers.

The second key to an effective blog is to take people places they may not have discovered on their own. Show them places, thoughts, and ideas they will find intriguing . . . and then create influence by helping them interpret what they are seeing and experiencing. Offer explanations of the information they are consuming. Direct them to other supportive sites so they can build some intensity around your ideas and begin to make them their own.

The third criterion is to direct them to actions. Start with small steps by getting them to disclose personal information. For example, have them give you their name and e-mail address in exchange for some privileged information or to be able to participate in an inner circle.

Finally, make them part of the conversation by allowing them to comment and share their ideas so they can become fervent supporters. Offer them insights into the effectiveness of spreading their ideas and messages. Publicly acknowledge their ideas and contributions. This is where readers become converts and converts become evangelists. And evangelists bring people hungry for your brand of salvation . . . more on that in a few chapters when I talk about building a cult following.

Subliminal Selling Secret

When you create your blog posts, be sure that you use your high value key words and search terms, along with any conversation domination-created term in your post headline. Also, be sure to repeat them a few times throughout the post body to increase the relevance of the post. Finally, be sure that you tag your post with the same terms to make it easy for searchers to find you.

To increase the awareness of the post and the value to the search engines, get your readers to go to Digg.com and Digg your story, or to stumbleupon.com and stumble it. High Digg and Stumbleupon rankings make the story more valuable and likely to be found online. The same is true at Technorati.com. Have people become fans of your blog at Technorati. Condition your readers to Digg every post, and make it easy for them by putting the Digg widget on your blog. If that last sentence made no sense to you at all, don't worry, just say it to the person who sets up your blog, and like magic, they'll make it appear.

Online Video

Google Video and YouTube have made distribution of video as simple as uploading a file, and it's free. That means virtually anyone can create powerfully persuasive video productions and begin influencing immediately. Before online video, citizen-created video was relegated to the realm of public access cable television, which is rarely viewed. On the other hand, there are literally millions of searches a day on Google Video and YouTube.

Video allows you to connect with your growing audience in a whole new way. They actually get to see you and hear you.

They get to use all of their senses to evaluate you. To effectively use video, keep them under five minutes. Make a single point and drive it home with frequency.

You can create television quality video using the free video editing software that comes with both a PC and the Macintosh and a simple handheld camera. The camera I recommend is the Canon Powershot SD series (the current model as of this writing is the SD1000). You can carry this tool with you everywhere you go. The camera itself is smaller than a deck of cards and shoots up to 60 frames per second of video. You can create a video wherever you are as long as you have enough light. And, demonstrating what you are talking about or reporting on others doing it makes you a reporter and a valuable source of information.

Focus on interpreting what the viewers are seeing to make your videos subliminally persuasive. Use the visual element to show them proof of what you are saying. Nothing persuades like firsthand experience. You can capture events, interviews with interesting people, and demonstrations of how to do something specific using your product or idea as the prominent tool.

When you create video, focus on your persona; remember that you are persuading subliminally. Be sure that you are congruent with the message you are sharing. Be sure you are appropriately dressed to influence your audience. Focus on your voice, make it smooth, engaging, and varied so that you are interesting to listen to. Take control if you are interviewing people, be direct in your questions, and dig in to get the answers your audience needs to see and hear.

Like all media, the key to success with video is content and relevancy. If you give people interesting content that they can

consume, and you tie it in with blog posts where they have a chance to scan information and dip deeper with video, you have created a highly compelling format that you can use to deeply influence your audience.

Social Networks

Social networks like Facebook.com, Myspace.com, Twitter.com, and LinkedIn.com have become massive gathering places for like-minded people. Let me give you an example. Go to Facebook.com right now and search for my name. If you don't have an account, set one up while you are there so you can see the power of this medium. Notice the number of friends I have and pick any one of them and see the number he has. You see how quickly you can connect with about anyone you want. It adds a whole new twist to the idea of six degrees of separation. Now that you've found me, click on the link for groups and in the search box type in *persuasion* and *influence*. There you'll find a whole host of like-minded people who are eager to discuss persuasion, influence, and marketing and who are eager to share their ideas and insights. Sign up and be a part to see how blindingly effective this medium can be.

This medium is effective because it is the ultimate referral system. People who are your friends are very likely to be receptive to your ideas and to helping you.

You can also create forums, groups, and blogs inside many of these social networking sites, and they're all free. Searching out people with like-minded interests is very easy, and allows you to quickly build a sphere of influence among people who are already actively communicating among themselves.

Teleseminars

Teleseminars are a logical extension of videos and blogs. These are interactive live events by phone where you can more deeply influence an audience that wants to hear from you. Think of teleseminars as syndication for the average person.

The goal with teleseminars is to provide timely, hot topic information to your most interested followers. Again, like most of the People's Media, this is a nearly free medium for you. You can get a free bridge line that will allow you to speak to up to 1,000 people simultaneously at freeconferencecall.com or highspeedconferencing.com.

Once you've set up your free account, you need only let people know the date and time that you'll be conducting your teleseminar, and you can educate everyone who calls in. You also have the option of having a two-way conversation, you can take questions, debate, or do anything else you want that furthers your point. This is again highly subliminally effective because of the deep level of engagement the phone has. People are conditioned to interacting with the phone in a very specific way and they fall into this subconscious routine the moment they pick up the phone. They also often enter a light trance state on the phone, making persuasion even more effective.

Coaching by phone or in person is another powerful persuasion tool that you can leverage, and I've included a special guide on persuasive coaching by Dr. Rachna Jain, the Coach Creator, in the appendix. Dr. Jain is a psychologist who will explain why coaching is highly persuasive and how you can leverage it. For a great example of persuasive coaching in action, visit masterpersuasionnow.com.

Group persuasion by phone is one of the most effective tools you can develop. It is the next best thing to being live in front of a group for gaining mass compliance. When I do teleseminars, I typically gain persuasive compliance (measured by the actions they take) of 20 to 50 percent of the attending audience.

Podcasting

Podcasting is the creation of audio programs that are available for automated downloads to mp3 players. The idea has great potential, but in reality, has not yet achieved the level of consumer acceptance that the industry thought it would.

But that isn't really important. It is effective when used appropriately.

Like video, podcasts should be very short and designed to communicate an idea quickly and completely. One of the ways I like to use podcasts is to reinforce ideas that I'm promoting in all of the other media. I'll create a brief podcast, for example, on the topic of using subliminal persuasion, to upsell at the retailer's cash register. I'll upload it to iTunes and libsyn.com so that people can download it. I'll make people aware of it in my blog, but I'll do something else and this is what makes it more effective as a persuasion tool. First, link directly to audio in your blog posts and build a post that supports what you are explaining. Second, use it to support your selling efforts on your web site by putting a play button next to a product or service so that people can listen to you as you explain why they should use the product or service.

Audio (like radio) is an effective persuasion medium, and to the extent that you can get people to actually download or listen to the audio, you can have a great impact.

Audio is also very effective when you use coaching as a tool to persuade.

Self-Publishing

Being an author offers you tremendous credibility in your targeted audience. Also, being an author is easier than it ever has been, thanks to self-publishing.

When you create a nonfiction book giving instruction on a topic that the audience desires, you get to influence their thinking for as many pages as you choose. The book allows you to lay out the decision criteria they should use, the buying criteria they should use, and allows you to build arguments that they can buy into over time.

In my first persuasion book, *Persuasion: The Art of Getting What You Want*, I laid out a complete process for writing a book quickly.

If I had to reinvent myself tomorrow and build a following fast, the first thing I'd do is write a book. A book is also highly effective in opening doors, getting past gatekeepers, and generating income fast.

But the real reason that books are so effective as subliminal persuasion tools is that they instantly identify you as an expert. People naturally choose experts over others when given a choice. There is less risk in choosing an expert. Books also indicate a certain level of intellectual mastery beyond the topic at hand, which also makes people comfortable. Most people feel like they could never write a whole book on a topic and feel that people who can have already done something they can't, so it isn't a big stretch to accept the proposal that the author is presenting them with.

The overarching persuasion strategy with the People's Media is to create a confluence of information focused on you and your ideas. The more that people hear about you, the more influential you become to them. By creating your own media empire, you create a following that is dedicated and highly compliant.

Implementation Is Everything

Money Follows Action

Before you read the next chapter, take the following actions:

- Write out a one-page or back-of-napkin plan about how you'll begin leveraging the People's Media.
- Sign up for Facebook at [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and invite me to be your friend so that you can start instantly expanding your online network. Also, search the [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) groups for Persuasion and Influence and join the group.
- Visit [masterpersuasionnow.com](https://www.masterpersuasionnow.com).

ESSENTIAL FURTHER STUDY

Books

Secrets of Online Persuasion—John Paul and Deborah Micek
(Morgan James, 2006)

On Writing Well—William Zinsser (HarperCollins, 2006)

Authority Site Black Book—Available for free download at
[authorityblackbook.com](https://www.authorityblackbook.com)

Movies

McLuhan's Wake (National Film Board of Canada, 2003)