

The Power of Persuasion
Putting the Science of Influence to Work in Fundraising

By Robert B. Cialdini

Stanford Social Innovation Review
Summer 2003

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THIS STORY BEGINS WITH A MYSTERY.

A few years ago, I read a newspaper article describing \$5,000 in humanitarian aid that had been sent between Mexico and Ethiopia. At the time, Ethiopia could fairly lay claim to the greatest suffering in the world. Because of a long drought and a series of armed conflicts, Ethiopians were dying daily by the hundreds of sickness and hunger. Relief agencies were calling out to the rest of the world for food, medicine, and funds. It was not surprising that such a gift would be sent.

It shocked me, though, when I read further and learned that the money had been sent *from* Ethiopia to Mexico. Officials of the Ethiopian Red Cross sent the funds that year to help victims of the

a way that leaves both parties feeling satisfied?

To answer these questions, I undertook a three-year program of research, studying the regular practices of professionals who had been getting me to comply with their requests all my life. I infiltrated various settings to learn from the inside. I enrolled incognito in the training program of sales organizations and learned how to sell encyclopedias, automobiles, and appliances. I took a job in a restaurant to see how servers generated larger tips. I worked in a public relations firm, in a pair of advertising agencies, and in the fundraising departments of two charity organizations.

What I learned surprised me.

Although I registered hundreds of individual compliance

THE POW^{of}ER persuasion

Mexico City earthquake. Now I was bewildered. Why would such a needy country make such a gift?

As it turns out, there was a very good reason. Despite the enormous needs prevailing in Ethiopia, the African nation sent the money to Mexico because, in 1935, Mexico had sent aid to Ethiopia when it was invaded by Italy.

The need to reciprocate had transcended great cultural differences, long distances, acute famine, many years, and immediate self-interest. A half-century later, against all countervailing forces, obligation triumphed.

As a psychology professor, the science of influence fascinates me. Why is it that one person feels obligated to another, and what compels someone to fulfill an obligation? Can one person influence another ethically, in

tactics, the great majority of techniques could be understood in terms of only a few universal principles of human behavior. In my book, "Influence: Science and Practice," I outline six rules of persuasion, and explain how companies and polished professionals utilize them to gain compliance – sometimes from unknowing and unwilling targets.

But the six rules need not be employed dishonorably. Savvy individuals can make full use of them, ethically, bettering society and providing fulfillment to willing donors. How do they do it? To find out, the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* sent out a questionnaire to nonprofit executive directors and consultants, and asked them which of the six rules were most relevant to their fundraising work.

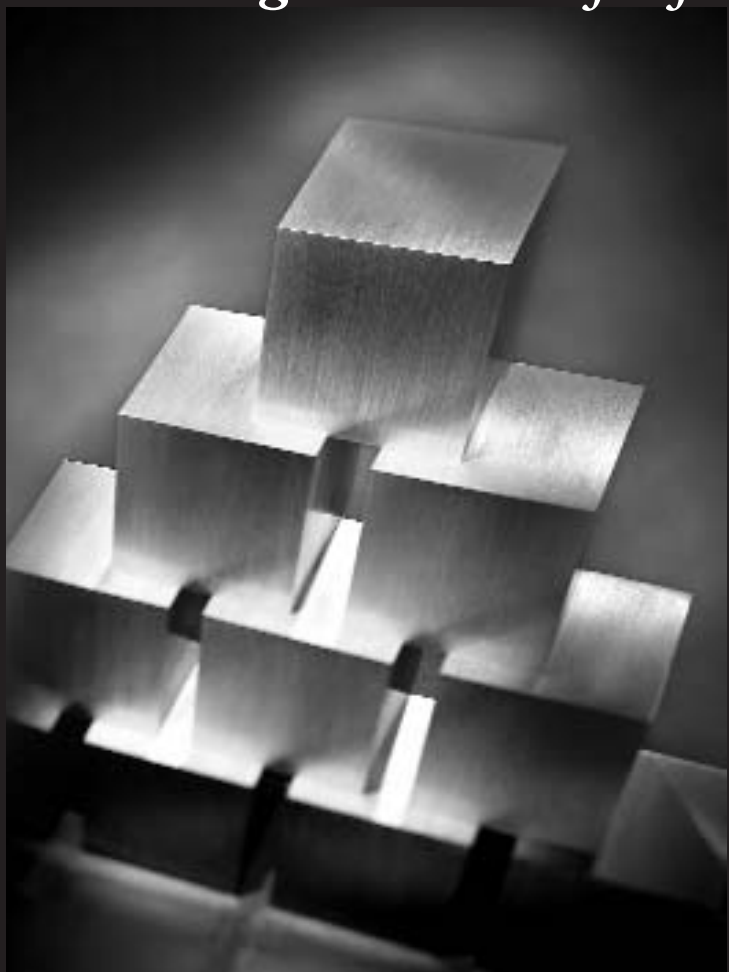
The survey results, as well as follow-up interviews, suggest that

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Putting the science of influence to work in fundraising



at least four rules offer unique opportunities for nonprofit development. They are: (1) “reciprocity” – people try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided them (it is this rule that prompted Ethiopia’s gift to Mexico); (2) “scarcity” – opportunities seem more valuable when they are less available; (3) “author-

a sample of strangers. The response was amazing – holiday cards came pouring back from people he never met. Most never inquired as to his identity. They received his holiday card, and they automatically sent cards in return.²

While small in scope, this study shows the potency of the rule



The savvy nonprofit leader taps the reciprocity rule by describing future support as payback for what their organization has already given.

ity” – people tend to defer to legitimate authorities as a decision-making shortcut; and (4) “consistency” – once people make a choice or take a stand, they encounter personal and interpersonal pressures to behave consistently with that commitment.¹

Although use of these principles optimizes influence, they are employed optimally by only a fraction of those who could benefit from them. Many nonprofit leaders regularly fumble away the chance to employ the principles because they do not understand them or know how to harness their force. Others know quite well what the principles are and how they work, but they import them dishonestly, achieving short-term goals while leaving a target feeling manipulated.

Successful nonprofit leaders understand the rules of influence and employ them ethically. Rather than putting people in a hammerlock, they uncover pre-existing affinities, “informing people to yes.” As a consequence, even after complying, people are likely to feel positively toward the nonprofit and its cause, and are more willing to comply with future requests.

RECIPROCITY

Several years ago, a university professor sent Christmas cards to

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of reciprocation. Each of us has been taught to live up to it, and each of us knows the social sanctions applied to violators. Part of reciprocity’s power stems from the fact that a person can trigger a feeling of indebtedness by doing an *uninvited* favor.³ People feel obligated to repay whether or not they have *asked* for a favor.

Many nonprofits employ the rule when they send free gifts or trinkets through the mail, hoping for a donation in return. For instance, the Disabled American Veterans organization reports that its simple mail appeal for donations produces a response rate of about 18 percent. But when the mailing also includes an unsolicited gift (gummed, individualized address labels), the success rate nearly doubles to 35 percent.

The Hare Krishna Society, an Eastern religious sect, employed this rule with similar results. A robed Krishna would walk up to a person in an airport and give them a gift, such as a flower or a copy of the “Bhagavad-Gita.” Often, people attempted to return the gift, but the Krishnas refused to take them back, requesting a donation instead. People who didn’t want the flowers often gave money anyway.

Over the years, however, it became more difficult for the Krishnas to use the strategy effectively, because they were using reciprocity to create obligations that didn’t exist naturally – exploiting it so only they benefited. Many soon became wise to their ways, and either avoided the sect members or deflected the gifts. Ultimately, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness declared bankruptcy in the United States. What had been a short-term fundraising success was a long-term failure.

The good news is that it is not necessary to use the rule in such a manipulative way. Nonprofit leaders can tap the reciprocity rule by uncovering and pointing out the services, benefits, and advantages that having their organization in the community has *already*

Rejection-Then-Retreat: Getting Them to Give

Reciprocity also governs another kind of behavior that lends itself to compliance: concessions. If two people start out with incompatible positions, and one person makes a concession, the other feels a need to reciprocate with a concession in return.

To test this technique, my research assistants and I conducted an experiment. We stopped people on the street and said we were from the county juvenile detention center, and we asked if they would be willing to chaperon a group of juvenile delinquents on a day trip to the zoo. Only 17 percent of those we asked complied. For other randomly selected individuals, we began with a larger request: We asked them to serve as counselors at the center, requiring two hours a week for three years. To that request, 100 percent of the individuals declined. We responded by saying, "Well, if you can't do that, would you be willing to chaperon a group of juvenile delinquents on a trip to the zoo for just one day?"

The results were dramatic: 50 percent of the individuals volunteered. We tripled willingness to comply with a sizable request by adding a few more words. But those words were crucial because they triggered the obligation to reciprocate a concession.

Researchers have also used this strategy to increase people's willingness to donate blood. They started out asking people to give a unit of blood every six weeks for two years. Once that was rejected, they said, "Well, would you be able to give just one unit of blood?" In such cases, people were much more likely to donate.

Frequently, nonprofit development directors have more than one level of request to make of people. Why start with the smaller one? As long as the larger one is legitimate, and not intended as a manipulation, fundraisers should start there. There's a chance they'll be successful. If not, they can retreat to a small request, significantly increasing the chances of compliance. —RC

provided to potential contributors. To corporate contributors, they can point to the benefits their organization has been providing to the community by making it a better place for the company to be located – making it easier for them to retain good employees and to attract new ones. To individual donors, development directors can point to the services and resources their organization has been providing all along – perhaps the social safety net they have been providing. The savvy nonprofit leader taps the reciprocity rule by describing future support as payback for what their organization has already given.

This is the approach taken by the Girl Scouts of the USA, which has some 3.7 million members in more than 233,000 troops worldwide. In addition to field trips, sports clinics, and community service projects, the Girl Scouts run several outreach programs. Girl Scouts in Public Housing, for example, creates troops for girls in impoverished homes, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). And yet, many people still hold a very narrow view of the Girl Scouts' mission.

"Many people have a notion of Girl Scouting that's stuck in the 1950s – centered on camping, selling cookies, and crafts projects," said Laura Westley, vice president of government relations and advocacy. "We want people to understand that we know more than how to make great chocolate mint cookies. We understand what's going on in girls' lives today."

Westley's job, in part, is to influence Capitol Hill lawmakers who control federal purse strings to appropriate funds for Girl Scouts programs. To do that, she relies on the law of reciprocity, alerting members of Congress to Girl Scout programming that is already benefiting their communities.

About a year and a half ago, for example, Westley took U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur, an Ohio Democrat, to visit a Girl Scout troop in a Toledo public housing project, enabling her to see the

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program's impact firsthand. After visiting, Kaptur (who sits on the House Appropriations Committee) began advocating for the program in Congress – ultimately resulting in a \$2 million federal allocation in fiscal year 2003 to fund its expansion.

“Part of the agenda is to have people understand what Girl Scouts is doing for the girls in their community, how it impacts the lives of volunteers, and how it impacts the community as a whole,” Westley said. “And the only way that most members of Congress and executive agency officials really get to know that is for someone to take the time to show them.”

Following this script, Westley says, has helped the Girl Scouts garner about \$15 million from the federal government since 2000.

SCARCITY

Mesa, Ariz., is a Phoenix suburb with a large Mormon population and a huge Mormon temple. Although I had appreciated the temple architecture from a distance (I live nearby), I had never been interested enough to go inside. That changed the day I read a newspaper article that told of a special inner sanctum that only the faithful were allowed to see.

The newspaper reported that there was one exception to this rule: For a few days immediately after a temple is newly constructed, nonmembers are allowed to tour the entire thing. As it happened, the Mesa temple had been recently renovated, and was therefore classified as “new.” Thus, for the next several days only, non-Mormon visitors could see the traditionally banned tem-

becoming less available. This, in a nutshell, is the powerful force behind the second tool of nonprofit influence: scarcity.

Almost everyone is vulnerable to the scarcity principle. Sometimes all that is necessary to make people want something more is to tell them that before long they can't have it. That's why advertisers use lines such as “limited supply,” “limited time only,” and “last chance offer.” People want products and services more under those conditions.

Research has shown that tasters rated cookies as better when they were scarce; consumers rated phosphate-based detergents as better once the government banned their use; university students rated their cafeteria food more highly when they thought the cafeteria would be closed; and young lovers rated themselves as more in love with their sweethearts as long as their parents tried to keep them apart.

While scarcity is commonly thought of as consuming products or services in limited supply, development directors can also take advantage of the scarcity rule by uncovering and describing their organization's uncommon or unique features that cannot be found elsewhere. If an organization is the only one in a given country, or even a given city, providing a needed service, development officers can and should let potential donors know this. Giving to such an organization may make donors feel special and privy to something few are part of. And directors should stress how a particular fundraising campaign will facilitate that uniqueness.

Global Greengrants Fund takes precisely this tactic when fundraising. Greengrants is a Boulder, Colo.-based charity that



Development directors can take advantage of the scarcity rule by uncovering and describing their organization's uncommon or unique features.

ple area. I immediately resolved to take a tour.

When I phoned a friend to ask if he wanted to come along, he wondered why I was so intent on a visit. I had never been inclined toward a temple tour before. I had no questions about the Mormon religion. I had no interest in church architecture. I realized that the temple's lure had a sole cause: If I did not experience the restricted sector soon, I would never again have the chance. Something that, on its own merits, held little appeal had become decidedly more attractive merely because it was rapidly

supports grassroots groups working for environmental justice and sustainability worldwide. The nonprofit, which generally makes grants of between \$500 and \$5,000, has a network of 100 volunteer advisors around the globe – local scientists, journalists, engineers, physicians, and activist leaders who are tapped into regional needs, and who facilitate selection of grantees.

Chet Tchozewski, Greengrants' founder and executive director, points out that the global network is itself a rare resource, arming the organization with scarce knowledge and information.

The Boy Who Cried ‘Scarcity’

The threat of potential loss plays a large role in human decision making. When uncertain, people are motivated more by the thought of losing something than by the thought of gaining something of equal value.

In a study done in California, researchers checked people's homes and advised them to insulate their houses to save energy. Half of the homeowners were told how much they would save every day if they insulated their homes fully. The other half were told how much they'd lose every day if they didn't. It was the same amount of money, but those who heard how much they'd lose were significantly more likely to insulate their homes. In a similar vein, physicians' letters to smokers describ-

ing the number of years of life that would be lost if they didn't quit were more effective than letters describing the number of years that would be gained if they did.¹

When trying to persuade contributors, fundraisers shouldn't only tell potential donors the benefits and services that stand to be gained from donations; they should tell them about all the benefits and services that stand to be lost from a lack of donations.

But development directors beware. Such threats can cause a boomerang effect. So says Kay Sprinkel Grace, an independent nonprofit consultant, whose clients currently include the Public Broadcasting System and National Public Radio. Sprinkel Grace

says that for a long time, public television and radio issued an "implied threat" during fundraising marathons: If watchers or listeners didn't give, public TV and radio would disappear.

"The problem was it never happened, so it was like the boy crying wolf," she said. "People soon figure out, 'I don't really have to give. It's still here. They'll get the money from someone else.'"

"The whole idea of scarcity is very influential to a point," she added, "and beyond that point it loses its influence completely." —RC

1 Wilson, D.K.; Purdon, S.E.; and Wallston, K.A. "Compliance to Health Recommendation: A Theoretical Overview of Message Framing," *Health Education Research: Theory and Practice* 3 (1998): 161-171.

The network allows the fund to make grants in places where others generally don't. In 2000, for example, Tchozewski says Greengrants was the only U.S. grantmaker to provide an environmental grant to Afghanistan, giving \$1,000 to a Pakistani-based organization to organize Earth Day events in Kabul and solar cooking demonstrations in Afghan villages. "Global Greengrants Fund is one of only a few sources of support to grassroots groups around the world," its Web site explains. "Less than 2 percent of U.S. giving goes to international causes and only a fraction of that goes to support grassroots environmental groups."⁴ Donors who give therefore make a unique contribution to international causes.

Tchozewski says individual and foundation donors who want to make overseas grants, but don't have the same access to global resources, will often give to Greengrants because of its local networks. "We are starting to work with large environmental groups," he adds, "who are coming to us because such networks are remarkably rare."

Nonprofits can also curry allegiance – and encourage future giving – by providing major givers with access and perks unavailable to the public.

Kay Sprinkel Grace, a San Francisco-based consultant who advises nonprofits, advocates this approach. In the mid-1990s, for

example, she advised the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco to offer major donors a "topping off" opportunity. With the church still under construction, top givers were invited to visit the site and write personal messages on the inner walls and pipes, which were later boarded over, sealing the messages inside – the definition of a limited time offer.

"The idea is to provide access to what you would not be able to see otherwise," Sprinkel Grace said. "That's where the big influence point is on this for nonprofits."

AUTHORITY

There exists a kind of expert worship in most cultures. People are very willing to follow the suggestions of legitimate authorities. This represents a kind of shortcut that people can use to decide what to do – and usually be right – without having to think too much about a situation.

Consider one study, in which researchers arranged for a 31-year-old man to violate the law by crossing the street against the red light and into traffic. In half the instances, he was dressed in a business suit and tie. The rest of the time, he wore a work shirt and trousers. The researchers found that three times as many

pedestrians were swept along behind the man into traffic, against the light and against the law, when he wore a suit – illustrating the power that just the *appearance* of authority can have on human behavior.

This rule provides a tool for nonprofit leaders who want to be more influential. Too many individuals who are genuine experts bungle away the opportunity to use this potent rule. They do so, for instance, by trying to persuade would-be donors without first mentioning their credentials, background, and experience in the matter.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium, which has about 1.8 million visitors each year, has developed an innovative strategy that taps into the authority rule. The aquarium is perhaps best known for its million-gallon “Outer Bay” tank, home to tuna, sharks, ocean sunfish, and sea turtles. But as part of its commitment to ocean conservation, the aquarium also publishes “Seafood Watch,” a wallet-sized card listing seafood in three categories – “best choices,” “proceed with caution,” and “avoid” – depending on how fish and shellfish are caught and farmed, and whether stocks are depleted. Patrons pick up the cards for free at the aquarium and participating restaurants, or download them from the Web site.⁵ Diners then use the cards as guides at restaurants. So, for instance, they would know that Pacific halibut is an eco-friendly meal, while monkfish and Atlantic swordfish are out.



The Monterey Bay Aquarium hands out free cards that help people decide what fish to eat. The card reminds patrons that the aquarium is an authority on ocean conservation.

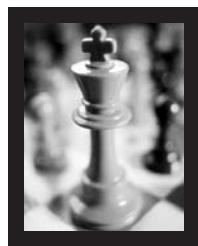
ing dinner or standing at the grocery seafood counter.

It also serves to remind patrons, more broadly, that the aquarium is a leading expert on ocean conservation. The card itself showcases highly specific information that conservationists would be hard-pressed to find anywhere else. It includes a link to the aquarium Web site, which explains how the staff researches and evaluates each seafood item on the guide and works with fishery and aquaculture experts to gather information. Web browsers who click on “About Seafood Watch” can peruse a searchable online database and download peer-reviewed reports on species from pink abalone to yesso scallops.⁶

So far, the aquarium has distributed close to one million cards since the program began in 2000. “It’s not a direct fundraising appeal,” Hekkers said, “[but] it increases the credibility of the organization and it makes people more prone to either join as members or contribute as donors.”

Global Greengrants also takes another step, establishing itself not only as an authority, but as a *credible* authority.

Research shows that credibility consists of two separate features: knowledge and *trustworthiness*. A credible expert is first of all knowledgeable, but also can be trusted to provide information in a way that is honest and not self-serving. Both factors are important, but of the two, it is usually more difficult



Three times as many pedestrians were swept along behind the man into traffic, against the light and against the law, when he wore a suit.

The main idea behind the card is to raise awareness about sustainable oceans, and ultimately to influence fishing practices. “Most people don’t consider themselves knowledgeable in the least about fisheries,” says Jim Hekkers, the aquarium’s executive vice president. They therefore will defer to the aquarium when order-

to establish trustworthiness. Even acknowledged experts will not be persuasive unless they are also viewed as trustworthy.

One way advertisers establish trustworthiness is to first say something that seems contrary to their interests – perhaps they mention that a competitor has a good product or that their own

RULE:	HOW TO USE IT:	EXAMPLE:
Reciprocity People try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided them.	Uncover and point out services and benefits that your organization already provides for a community, corporation, or individual.	Girl Scouts invited key members of Congress and executive agency officials to visit troops in public housing complexes.
Scarcity Opportunities seem more valuable when they are less available.	Uncover and describe your organization's uncommon or unique features that cannot be found elsewhere.	Global Greengrants' Web site points out that it is one of very few U.S. groups that support international grassroots organizations.
Authority People tend to defer to legitimate authorities as a decision-making shortcut.	Uncover and communicate your organization's expertise.	Monterey Bay Aquarium distributes free Seafood Watch pocket guides showcasing their own research on sustainable fisheries.
Consistency Once people make a choice or take a stand, they encounter personal or interpersonal pressures to behave consistently with that commitment.	Invite board members to declare publicly what they are willing to do, and get them to write it down. Encourage active involvement from would-be donors.	At the end of a board retreat, St. Luke's Hospital asked foundation trustees to state publicly and specifically what they would commit to do for the capital campaign.

product has some minor drawback. Think of Avis' car rental commercial: "We're number two, but we try harder." By coming out and saying it is not number one, Avis establishes honesty.

How does Greengrants employ this rule? Consider this blurb, which appears on the fund's Web site, explaining its grantmaking model: "It is hard for grantmakers to identify grassroots groups in remote areas; it is hard to transfer funds; and it is hard to monitor grantee progress. Combined, these obstacles can make grassroots grantmaking a challenging enterprise."

At first glance, such an admission may seem strange. After all, Greengrants needs donors to fund it, despite the challenging odds. The admission, however, is followed quickly with a positive assertion: "Global Greengrants Fund has created a highly efficient and reliable system for finding and funding local grassroots environmental groups. By forming an international network of advisory boards for specific regions and environmental issues, we streamline our grantmaking and help link our advisors and grantees in a community that can share knowledge, viewpoints, and strategies."

Many fundraisers describe both the strengths and weaknesses of their case; but most start with the strengths before dropping in the weaknesses. Mention the drawbacks first – that a given grant

will only impact one small aspect of a larger societal problem – and only then bring up the strongest arguments. The consequence should be not only effective, but ethical as well.

CONSISTENCY

A pair of Canadian psychologists uncovered something fascinating about people at the racetrack: just after placing bets they are much more confident than they are immediately before.⁷ Nothing about the horse's chances actually shifts; it's the same horse, on the same track, in the same field. But in the bettors' minds, the horse's prospects improve significantly.

The dramatic change is caused by a common tool of social influence that lies deep within people, directing their actions with quiet power. It is, quite simply, a desire to be (and to appear) consistent with what we have already done. Once we make a choice or take a stand, social and internal pressures prompt us to behave consistently with that commitment.

Research indicates that a person's sense of commitment deepens even further if the commitment is made voluntarily and publicly, and if it is written. Donors, for example, are much more likely to fulfill pledges that are uncoerced, public, and put in ink.

Suppose a nonprofit wanted to increase the number of people who would agree to go door-to-door collecting donations. It would be wise to study the approach taken by social psychologist Steven J. Sherman. He simply called a sample of Bloomington, Ind., residents as part of a survey and asked them to predict what they would say if asked to spend three hours collecting money for the American Cancer Society. Not wanting to seem uncharitable, many of these people said they would volunteer. The consequence of this subtle commitment procedure was a 700 percent increase in volunteers when, a few days later, a representative of the American Cancer Society did call and ask for neighborhood canvassers.⁸

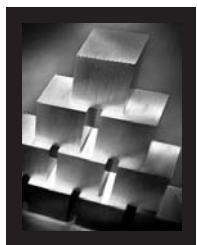
Sprinkel Grace advises her clients to utilize the rule on board retreats – by asking board members to make voluntary declarations indicating what they would be willing to do, specifically, to help make a capital campaign a success. Sometimes, she advises

said. “It’s made all the difference in the world.”

Ultimately, the best evidence of people’s true feelings and beliefs comes less from their words than from their deeds. Researchers have discovered that people use their own behavior to decide what they are like.⁹

The rippling impact of past behavior on future behavior can be seen in studies investigating the effect of active versus passive commitments.¹⁰ In one study, college students volunteered for an AIDS education project. The researchers arranged for half to volunteer actively by filling out a form. The other half volunteered passively by *failing* to fill out a form stating that they *didn’t* want to participate. When asked to begin their volunteer activity, 74 percent who appeared for duty came from the ranks of those who had actively agreed to participate.¹¹

Once an active commitment is made, self-image is squeezed from both sides. From the inside, there is a pressure to bring self-



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board members to make their pledges publicly, at the end of the retreat. (“I will take one person to lunch,” or “I will make four phone calls.”)

Part of the strength of the approach, Sprinkel Grace says, is that it allows board members to sign up for work that most appeals to them. Another strength, she says, is that the pledges are voluntary.

Sprinkel Grace recently advised this approach for the St. Luke’s Health Care Foundation in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The foundation CEO had been discouraged by a failure to get board members actively involved. So, at the end of a board retreat in February, board members were invited to read out what they were willing to do, based on their own individual strengths. Some promised to bring would-be donors on hospital tours; others promised to contact a certain number of people by year’s end; still others said they would work to establish concrete relationships with a specific local community.

As a result of the commitments, the board members have been following up on their pledges like never before. “Every single one of them listed at least one thing they would do,” Sprinkel Grace

image into line with action. From the outside, there is a pressure to adjust this image according to the way others perceive us.¹²

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

Reciprocity, scarcity, authority, and consistency are four powerful tools of influence when employed separately. But to maximize impact, nonprofit leaders should utilize the tools in concert.

Claudia Looney, senior vice president of development for Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, understands the power of such an approach. Her fundraising strategy, which has raised \$310 million over the past three years, taps all four rules.

For Looney, one key is getting would-be givers to visit the hospital. “The traditional approach of having potential donors read brochures about the institute is not enough,” she says. “For people of influence and affluence, we take a more hands-on approach. It makes a big impact when we take a prospect on a tour and have them see for themselves our young patients and their families receiving specialized care.”

About four years ago, for instance, the hospital began court-



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ing a potential donor who had an interest in cancer research, along with her husband. Officials running the hospital's cancer campaign met the couple and invited them to the hospital to learn more.

Before the couple arrived, Looney and her staff planned a down-to-the minute schedule intended to maximize persuasive impact. Doctors were given "talking points" ahead of time; "team members" understood in advance the specific goals.

At the hospital, the couple met two key researchers testing a new leukemia drug; they were told that if the drugs were ultimately successful, they could boost survival rates from 15 to 85 percent. The potential donors looked through the microscopes, examining slides firsthand. Later, they met the head of the oncology program and toured the neonatal intensive care unit. At lunch, they met with several doctors who explained what the future might hold – with enough funding.

The hospital continued cultivating the relationship for some time, inviting the couple to small dinner parties at the homes of hospital trustees. They were invited to volunteer on a hospital advisory committee; the woman joined the board. It was after a trustee dinner that the couple gave \$25,000, followed by a gift of \$1 million.

The courtship, as it turned out, was a clinic in ethical persuasion. The day at the hospital allowed Looney to tap the reciprocity rule, uncovering for the couple the many services, benefits, and advantages that Childrens Hospital Los Angeles was already providing for cancer patients in the community. The couple was afforded scarce access to physicians, labs, and patient facilities, and had unprecedented contact with researchers, yielding a trove of privileged information. The hospital also tapped the scarcity rule by alerting the couple to unique research targeting a cure for leukemia. The meetings highlighted the hospital's authority and expertise by putting world-class oncologists and cancer researchers front and center. Before long, the couple's commitment had moved beyond simply intellectual interest and become active; their gifts were behaviorally consistent with all the time and energy they had committed to the hospital.

"If people don't resonate with the cause," Looney says, "then they are not going to support you. They have to live it, breathe

it, and understand it."

Understanding the rules of influence – how they work, and how to use them in the service of a cause – is a great place to start. □

1 The two other principles are "social proof" (people view a behavior as correct in a given situation to the degree that they see others performing it), and "liking" (people prefer to say yes to individuals they know, are similar to, and like). These rules are intrinsic to nonprofit fundraising. For instance, a donor might decide to give because several other well-known community members have already given (social proof); or, a donor might give because a friend, peer, colleague, or co-worker is doing the asking (liking). Because these rules are so widely employed by modern-day fundraisers, we focus our analysis on the other four, which present much untapped growth potential.

2 Kunz, P.R. and Woolcott, M. "Season's Greetings: From My Status to Yours," *Social Science Research* 5 (1976): 269-278.

3 Paese, P.W. and Gilin, D.A. "When an Adversary is Caught Telling the Truth," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 26 (2000): 79-90.

4 See <http://www.greengrants.org/index.html>.

5 See <http://www.mbayaq.org/cr/seafoodwatch.asp>.

6 See <http://www.seafoodinfocenter.org/aboutus.html>.

7 Knox, R.E. and Inkster, J.A. "Postdecision Dissonance at Post Time," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 8 (1968): 319-323.

8 Sherman, S.J. "On the Self-Erasing Nature of Errors of Prediction," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39 (1980): 211-221.

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