

Door-In-The-Face

One Persuasion Without Pressure™ form of the reciprocity strategy is what is known as the “door-in-the-face” (DITF) strategy. The basic concept of the strategy is to first ask for a large first request, which will more than likely be rejected. After the rejection of the first request, it is followed up with a smaller, desired, request. The idea is that after rejecting the large request, the subject will view the second request as a concession, and thus offer a concession of his/her own by complying with the second, smaller request.

Cialdini described an example of this strategy when he encountered a Boy Scout on a mission. As the story goes, a 10 or 11 year-old boy who said that he was selling tickets to the annual Boy Scouts Circus approached him. He asked Cialdini if he would like to purchase a couple tickets for \$5 apiece. When Cialdini declined the boy then asked, “Well, if you don’t want to buy any tickets, how about buying some of our chocolate bars? They’re only \$1 each. He bought two bars and then realized that something unique had just happened. He felt this way because, as he tells it, he doesn’t like chocolate, he does like dollars, and he was standing there holding two chocolate bars and the boy was walking away with two of his dollars. Cialdini had fallen for the DITF strategy. He had rejected the first request of buying some \$5 tickets, so when the request was reduced to only buying some candy bars for a \$1, he conceded even though he doesn’t like chocolate.

The most cited explanation of the DITF effect is known as reciprocal concession. This explanation is based on the “Norm of Reciprocity” principle espoused by George Simmel in 1950. This concept says that all contacts among men rest on the schema of giving and returning the equivalence. If someone gives a concession, then the person receiving the concession will in turn

concede to the other person. While some have challenged this idea, it is still considered the most accepted explanation.

Other explanations include contrast effects, guilt, and self-perception theory.

Elements of Effectiveness

There are three important elements to be considered in regards to the effectiveness of the DITF strategy. They are the size of the first request, the individual or organization making the request, and the time lapse between requests.

Size of the First Request

When making the initial, large, request it is important NOT to make the request so large as to invoke a feeling of being manipulated by the client. Such a feeling would invoke a statement similar to “what does this guy think I am, stupid or something?” you must maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the client, in order for him/her to view the second request as being a concession.

Individual/Organization Making the Request

Results from testing the DITF effect has proven to be greater when the same person makes both requests. This is also true when the same organization is being represented for both requests. When comparing situations where the same person made the requests on the behalf of the same organization verses different people making the two requests or when different organization were

represented with each request, results indicate that when it was the same person and organization the DITF effects were greater.

Time Lapse Between Requests

DITF effects diminish drastically when there is a long lapse in the time between the two requests. In order for the DITF effect to occur, the request should be made immediately after the first request. Should circumstances necessitate a delay before making the second request, another strategy should be chosen.

Three Bonus Side Effects

There are three important side effects of using the DITF method. 1) It creates responsibility. This occurs because they will see themselves as the ones who determined the final outcome. 2) It appears that there is additional satisfaction when an agreement is determined through the concession of your opponent. Studies have shown that when this strategy was used the client was found to be more satisfied with the final agreement than those who simply got what they wanted from the start. 3) As a result of the first two side effects, people are more likely to perform future requests if they feel that they can control the outcome and gain concession with the other person. If they are feeling good about their encounter with you, they are more likely to do business with you again.

The ways in which the reciprocity strategy can be used come in a variety of shapes and sizes. The important thing to remember is to keep it subtle, and avoid creating undue pressure by allowing the feelings of obligation and indebtedness to cause the client to feel manipulated or cornered. If you sense this happening provide him/her a way out and try a new approach. As we said earlier, you can gain compliance by allowing the pressure to build, but you

may not get a long-term client. For PWP to work, the client must believe that it was his/her decision, and that he/she did it without outside pressure. When this occurs, they take responsibility, and therefore, become committed to their decision.

Foot-In-The-Door

Establishing commitment and consistency can be done by way of making a small request, and then once it is complied with, a second, larger request is made (this would be your target request, what you have wanted all along). Because the client said yes to the first, small request, the laws of consistency will kick in and make it hard to say no to the second, larger request. This strategy is known as Foot-In-The-Door (FTID). The effectiveness of this strategy was first recognized by Freedman and Fraser (1966). Since that time a multitude of studies have been done which have verified the FTID effect.

The most asserted explanation for Foot-In-The-Door is what is known as *self-perception theory (Mixed in with consistency)*. This theory states that individuals discover their attitudes, emotions, and other internal states by viewing their own personal behaviors. In other words, “you are what you do.” As an example let’s say that you are asked to sign a petition that is aimed at keeping an airport from being built very close to your home. This request has relevance to your life so you sign it as a concerned resident. After you’ve signed the petition, you are then asked to make a donation to the cause. Since you have already presented yourself as a concerned resident who wants to keep your neighborhood absent from the overhead noise and pollution from airplanes taking off and landing, the pressure is now on for you to maintain your self-image. Maintaining your self-image involves maintaining consistency with your prior commitment and action (signing the petition). Chances are greater that

you will make a donation because of your compliance to the first small request, and your desire to be seen as consistent.

Having a client agree to a trivial request, will not only increase your chances of gaining compliance to the larger, target request, it can cause the client to be more willing to say yes to performing a variety of larger requests that are only remotely associated with the smaller request, earlier complied with.

Elements of Effectiveness

As with the DITF strategy, there are three important elements to be considered in regards to the effectiveness of the FITD strategy. They are the size of the first request, the individual or organization making the request, and the time lapse between requests.

Size of the First Request

The first request cannot be too small or it will have no emotional or attitudinal affects on the client and therefore, not trigger the FTID effect. At the same time it can't be too large and be rejected, thus, nullifying the FITD effect from occurring.

Individual/Organization Making the Request

Research has shown that the FTID effect is not greater when the same person makes both requests, or when the request is on behalf of the same organization, verses different requester or organizations. Sameness has shown to have no significant effect of FTID.

Time Lapse Between Requests

While the greatest results have occurred when the second request has been made within two days of the first request, FITD effects have been found when the second requests has been made as much as two weeks later.

It is also important to note that research has indicated that the offering of incentives neutralizes the effect. Therefore, allow the client to take full ownership of his/her decision.