

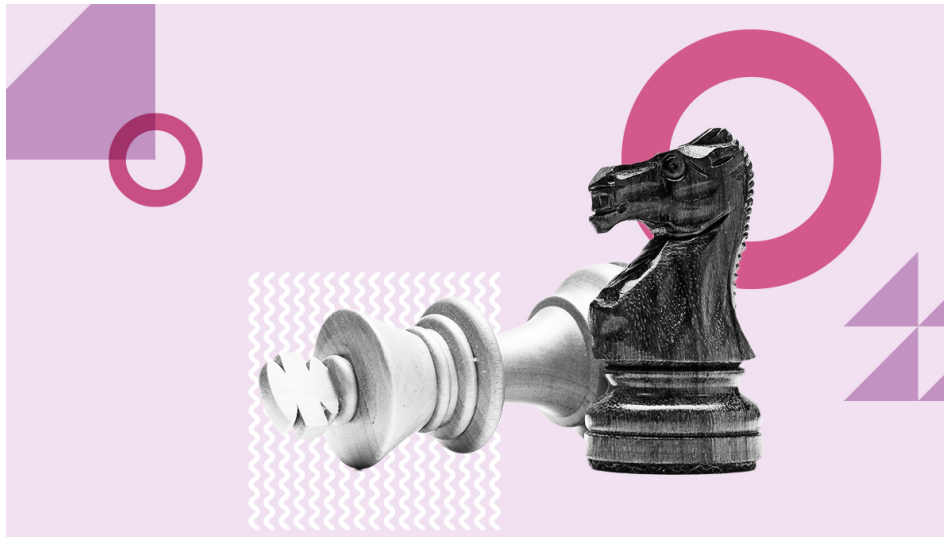


Persuasion

The Art of Persuasion: Our Favorite Reads

by Paige Cohen

November 25, 2021



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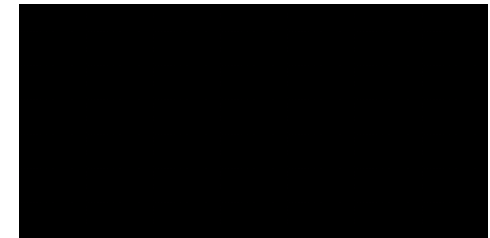
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When I first began working at HBR around four years ago, one of the first articles I edited — and one of my favorite pieces we’ve published to date — was [a piece written by Carmine Gallo](#) about how the art of persuasion hasn’t changed in 2000 years.

Gallo explains that, at some time in the 4th century, somewhere along the sandy shores of Ancient Greece, a philosopher named Aristotle wrote a treatise called [Rhetoric](#). In this work, he outlined a formula that history’s greatest influencers have used to convince other people that their ideas are good ones:

- **Ethos (character)**
Establish your credibility.
- **Logos (reason)**
Tell people why they should care.
- **Pathos (emotion)**
Use story to connect to people on a personal level.
- **Metaphor**
Clarify an abstract idea by comparing it to something concrete.
- **Brevity**
Less is always more. (People get distracted quickly.)

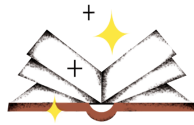
Over the past few months, I’ve come back to this formula time and again. While most of us are taught rhetorical skills in the context of giving a speech or [presentation](#), they can also be used at any time to help you share your perspective, and more importantly, to help other people understand and relate to where you’re coming from. Today, this is



especially useful — as we are living in a very divided world and that involves having some challenging conversations.

Of course, there is the caveat that persuasion can be dangerous too. Just like it has been used for good, it can be, and has been, used to hurt and manipulate people. But I'd argue this is all the more reason to study the form, so you can recognize when and how it is being used.

Here are a few tools you can use to grow your influence at work and help other people understand your point of view.



Recommended Reads

3 Ways to Grow Your Influence in a New Job

by Luis Velasquez and Jenny Fernandez

When you land a new role or have just been promoted, it's easy to focus on achieving a quick win at the expense of building relationships with your colleagues and direct reports. But the best managers know how to achieve both results by influencing downward, sideways, and upward.

Is Your Pitch as Great as Your Idea?

by Duncan Wardle

Even the most innovative ideas are interpreted as boring if they are presented in obvious ways. Your pitch needs to be as clever as the concept you are presenting if you want people to buy into it.

You Can't Sit Out Office Politics

by Niven Postma

Office politics are about relationship currency and influence capital — and the power these two things give you or don't give you. The myth that “office politics” are always unethical or evil need to be debunked.

How to Get Your Big Ideas Noticed By the Right People

by Andy Molinsky and Jeff Tan

Many young employees have big ideas for change in the world, but are met with barriers when they try to share them. Finding and connecting with the right people can make all the difference.

Become a Better, Stronger, and More Confident Negotiator

by Michelle Gibbings

Sometimes you need to meet people in the middle, but this can be difficult, especially if you are trying to persuade someone who has more power than you. Use these steps to help you get what you want in that situation.

Strengthen Your Ability to Influence People

by Ben Laker and Charmi Patel

Researchers looked through 200 years of data from more than 200 countries to identify two approaches that leaders use to influence others. Do you recognize them?

Like what you see? This article is adapted from [our weekly newsletter](#).



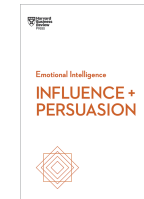
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Paige Cohen (she/they) is a senior editor at Ascend.



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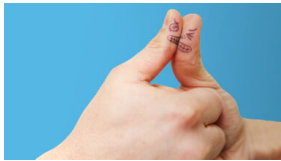


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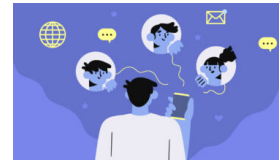
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