

# Reflection on Compliance Tactics Activity

## Foot in the Door Tactic

### Definition of the Foot-in-the-Door Effect.

The foot-in-the-door effect is a compliance tactic in which a person is more likely to agree to a larger, more significant request after first consenting to a smaller, seemingly innocuous one. In other words, once an individual commits to an initial minor request, they develop a self-image of being helpful or cooperative, which makes it easier for them to agree to a subsequent, larger request. This tactic capitalizes on principles of consistency and self-perception, as individuals strive to maintain a coherent self-image by aligning their behaviors with their prior commitments.

### Description of My Experience Using Foot-in-the-Door technique.

For my first instance, I approached a long-time friend Emmet - a person with whom I share mutual interests in coding and technology, particularly Linux and open source development - to help me with a project. The particular project was creating a login replacement for logind on Debian using a program that writes to the framebuffer, and uses PAM-authentication to complete the login process and has support for fprint-id. Knowing Emmet values open source principles, and he values his image as a good programmer, and a supportive and helpful friend, I decided I could use the foot-in-the-door tactic to secure his help with this project and also have a submission for this project.

### Initial Small Request.

I began by casually asking Emmet to review a small code snippet I had worked on. The program was written in C and I know he has an affinity for that programming language, as I do. Because this was a low-commitment request, because of his affinity for C, and because it was in line with what he had helped me with in the past (compiling, and modifying DWM), he agreed readily. This initial small task was enough for him to reaffirm his self-concept as someone who is both knowledgeable of C, and willing to assist others with technical, and difficult challenges.

### Following with a Larger Request:

After receiving the feedback on the code, I built on that initial commitment. I explained I was working on a more complex aspect of the project (particularly the PAM override authentication in C) that I required more than just code review, but also development of new functionality, and fixing of errors. Since Emmet had already agreed to the smaller request, the additional request seemed like a natural progression. His earlier compliance made him more inclined to help - and he continued to see himself as supportive and capable. As a result, Emmet

did agree to help design and develop the PAM authentication that FBlogin required.

### **Reflection on the Process:**

Throughout the process, I noticed Emmet's initial compliance set a tone of consistency. By agreeing to the smaller request, he implicitly committed to the idea that he was a reliable and helpful friend. The self-consistency, described in the lecture, contributed to his willingness to take a more significant task on. I also observed that his positive feedback and genuine interest was bolstered by the fact that the larger request followed naturally from an earlier, less invasive one. The smooth transition of expectations is a clear demonstration of the foot-in-the-door effect in action. The strategy was effective because it leveraged Emmet's existing self-image, his love for coding, and his particular affinity for C, which were all reinforced by his earlier compliance, ultimately leading to the successful involvement in a larger task that benefited my project.

## **Door-in-the-Face Technique**

### **Definition of the Door-in-the-Face Technique**

The door-in-the-face effect is a compliance tactic in which an initial, large, and intentionally unreasonable request is made knowing that it is likely to be rejected. Once this first request is refused, the requester then presents a more moderate and reasonable second request. Due to the contrast between the enormous initial demand and the more modest follow-up, individuals tend to perceive this second request as more acceptable, or reasonable and are more likely to agree to it. This tactic leverages the principle of reciprocity and the human tendency to respond in a manner that is consistent with the initial act of negotiation.

### **Describing my Experience using the Door-in-the-Face Effect.**

In my role as a fraternity president, I occasionally face the challenge of mobilizing support for various events and initiatives. For my second compliance tactic, I decided to engage a fellow fraternity member, someone who is normally cautious about overcommitting to help organize a key event that was vital to the preparation of our 50th anniversary.

### **Initial Overwhelming Request:**

During one of my nights at the house, I initially asked a fraternity brother of mine, Sam, to commit to overseeing an upcoming house-improvement day, which is a day in which we encourage, and support, the improvement of the house through the active labor of our active brother membership. This includes planning, budgeting for cleaning supplies we may need for that day, informing the masses through our communication channels or day-of-event coordination, and mapping out current issues that need to be addressed. I was fully aware

that this request was quite ambitious and unreasonable for anyone that isn't the executive board, or the house improvement officer, but especially ambitious given his other responsibilities and the time commitment involved. As expected he declined, stating it was too much to take on by himself at the moment.

### **Presenting a More Reasonable Request.**

I then followed up with a second, more modest request. I asked if he could consider joining the house improvement officer, as well as his committee, to help in the planning, budgeting, and day-of-event coordination. I explained he would only have to take on one aspect of the three responsibilities as the House Improvement Committee is rather extensive in population. The request was considerably less taxing and seemed much more manageable in comparison to the initial proposal.

### **Reflection on Door-in-the-Face Effect**

The contrast between the two requests caused Sam to agree to this second request, largely because he took an interest in house improvement, and because it seemed minimal when compared to the grand initial proposition. This experience reinforced the understanding of how making a deliberately excessive first request can be used to set the stage for a more acceptable second request. I believe that his compliance was driven by the relative reduction in the level of commitment required, the addition of more individuals on the requested task, and his subconscious desire to reciprocate the effort I made in considering his limitations. Additionally, the social norms within the organization, to support the chapter as a whole, likely contributed to his decision to help once the request was more reasonable. This process was a demonstration of how door-in-the-face tactic can be applied effectively, even in the context of leadership.

### **Overall Reflection:**

These two experiences highlight the power of compliance tactics in everyday interpersonal interactions but also demonstrate how aligning a request with a person's self-image and perceived obligations can increase the likelihood of compliance. With Emmet, the small-to-large request progression capitalized on his commitment to being a helpful individual, and to be considered a fantastic coder. In contrast, the door-in-the-face technique, which I used on Sam, a fraternity brother of mine, effectively leveraged the psychological impact of contrast between an unreasonably high initial request, with an initial refusal, followed by a subsequent, more moderate and reasonable one. Both approaches are a fascinating demonstration of human behavior, and social influence, and they serve as a practical example of the theories covered in the lectures thus far. Reflecting on the interactions, it provides me with valuable insights for my future leadership roles, mainly that it is important to understand some information about the individual before you attempt a compliance tactic. Overall this was a

fun experiment as it forced me to consciously take consideration of my behavior and my social influences on other individuals.