



## The 6 Principles of Influence - Robert Cialdini

The Psychology of Persuasion by Robert Cialdini (1984) has been popular for about 30 years. While the six principles in the book have stood the test of time, the examples have not. We have changed/updated those examples in this handout.

1. **Reciprocation** - This is where you do something for someone else. This may be in the form of a service, a favour or even a gift. Because you have done something for them, they feel the need to respond in kind. Remember, the value is not necessarily the gift but more the giving.

Examples may include supporting them in a cause by presenting their case to a senior person, smoothing things on a journey of change, giving them personal one-to-one time, and being open, honest and willing to discuss their worries or concerns.

2. **Social Proof** - People don't usually want to be different; they don't want to stand out from the crowd. This means we often look to see if others are doing something first, buying something or saying something before deciding to do it ourselves.

Examples may include what to wear to an event, what to vote in an election, who to side with in a team discussion, what to say about a leader, and whether to agree with an idea or a suggestion.

3. **Commitment and Consistency** – Generally, we don't like to change our position or stance on something, and sometimes, we'll not change even if we feel we probably should (Social Proof may impact this). If we make a promise to someone and later wish we had not, perhaps an offer to help them with a job, we will still honour that promise.

Examples may include promising to email the documents across, and we do so. When we say that we will complete and submit that form to HR tomorrow, we do just that. We are consistently reliable in how we operate and perform. This is critical in how we work and for trust.

4. **Liking** - It stands to reason that we will be more readily influenced by those we like. We have decided we like them because of who we believe they are, what they are like and how they have treated us. Because of this, we will have far greater influence with those who like us in return.

Examples include being nice to others and being authentic, open and honest. Being caring, accommodating and flexible so you earn their trust, and they like who you are.

5. **Authority** - By authority, we don't just mean those in charge; we include the subject matter experts with great experience, which grants a form of authority. People with authority are usually themselves influencers. We tend to be influenced by them and listen to them.

Examples can include building our own personal brand, which becomes recognised so we gain credibility and authority. Becoming that subject matter in our field or gaining qualifications and certifications in industry-related topics.

6. **Scarcity** - The less there is of something, the more we seem attracted to it! Our brain sees an opportunity that is limited, so it thinks it needs to take advantage of it quickly. The less time there is to take advantage of something, the more we feel drawn to take action.

Examples include time-based deadlines for returns, season tickets available until a cut-off date, spending the remaining budget before we lose it, or even that black Friday special limited offer.