

## 6 Ways to Be More Persuasive With Social Media



November 16, 2011 by [Neil Patel](#) 35

[Neil Patel](#) is the co-founder of [KISSmetrics](#), an analytics provider that helps companies make better business decisions.

How can you be persuasive with consumers on social media? One of the best books on persuasion is called [Influence](#), in which author Robert Cialdini describes six elements of effective persuasion.

I share those tactics below and analyze how they can best be applied to a social media audience.



### 1. Reciprocation – The Oldest Trick in the Book

Reciprocation is built upon the theory that if you give something as a gift and then ask the recipient for a favor, they'll respond in kind.

For example, [Dropbox](#) will give you 2GB of storage space for free. But the company asks you to return the favor by sharing the service with friends, then rewards you with another 250 MB of space. That's reciprocity.

Another common social media strategy is to give away [ebooks](#). For example, after a customer has downloaded a free ebook, encourage that person to subscribe to your blog, [Facebook](#) Fan page or [Twitter](#) account — "Now that you have the book, would you mind following me on Twitter?"

### 2. Social Proof – Don't Be Left Behind

When it comes to making decisions, we often look to other people for clues. This is called social proof. Here are a few indicators of social proof in the social media world.

- **Subscriber or follower counts** – Are a lot of people following this blogger? Then you probably should follow him too.
- **Reviews** – If you see that a book has over 500 reviews and an average four stars, you are more likely to buy it than a book without any reviews.
- **Comments** – Blog posts with hundreds of comments suggest that it is a very good (or very controversial) post. You are more tempted to see what's going on.
- **Share counts** – If you see an article has been tweeted 1,200 times, you are more likely to read it than an article tweeted 50 times.

Bottom line: When it comes to social media, a large audience is golden.

### 3. Liking – Never Met a Stranger

When Cialdini talks about "liking," he doesn't mean the "Like" button on Facebook. He means, *do people like you?* Here are a few ideas how this works on the social web.

- **Be warm and personable** – Whether you're on [LinkedIn](#) or [Google+](#), talk to people how you would interact with them at a cocktail party.
- **Give people things they want** – For example, if you know somebody is looking for research studies on mobile app marketing, and you come across some information, share it with that person.
- **Be polite** – Unfortunately, it's very easy to let it all hang out online, but you shouldn't do that. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.
- **Be funny** – If you have a sense of humor, flaunt it online. People love to laugh, even in professional contexts.

### 4. Authority – Why You Must Listen to Me

What does authority look like in social media? Maintaining relationships with well-known brands can only help. For example, if any of your articles have been published in popular offline or online publications, display that content on your social media accounts.

If you've ever published a book or built a successful company, you are considered an authority. Developed an app? You are an expert.

Highlight your exceptional achievements in your social media interactions and you'll have greater influence with your audience.

### 5. Scarcity – Last Chance to Be Popular

Scarcity is another way of saying you have a limited supply of something. When it comes to social media, weave scarcity into your efforts.

- **Limit your interactions online** – [James Altucher](#) hosts a 30-minute Q&A on Twitter every Thursday. People flood him with questions during that time because they know he's not available otherwise.
- **Time your interactions** – Online attention is scarce. Therefore, identify the best times to interact with your social media communities. Master [social media timing](#) and you'll increase your social media performance.
- **Use deadlines** – Force people to act quickly by limiting how long a product, opportunity or offer is available.

### 6. Commitment and Constancy – Don't Go Back on Your Word

This is where it all comes together. During the entire process of connecting with your social networks using the 6 elements of persuasion, you must make commitments.

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For example, ask people to share an ebook before they download it. Once they download, *remind them of their commitment*.

Push those commitments because most people dislike their own inconsistencies. If they commit to something, they will follow through.

## Conclusion



To be successful in both life and business, you must ask people for help. But first, you have to convince them to comply with your requests.

Social media allows you to do that by giving you the tools to be a connector and persuader, whether offline or online. What other examples of persuasion in social media have you seen?


*Image courtesy of [iStockphoto](#), [adventr](#)*

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35 Comments

1.  [Kev Hudson Follow](#) 


Everyone can learn something from this article.

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It's so hard to achieve the "scarcity" objective. I can't limit my interaction to just once a week- I'm checking these things nonstop!

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I love tactic #1 "Reciprocation"...What you give comes back to you, if you reward them then they will reward you back by being a loyal customer. Psychology at work.

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LOL! Just read this book recently~ amazing topics and ideas~ just don't enjoy the writing style much... lol

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resourceful



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Even for those who have been using social media for a bit, it is nice to be reminded of how this can benefit your small business. Thanks for the post!



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Awesome Neil!



Coming back the the "Scarcity" subject, i think combining it with "Reciprocation" is key to successful results, lets say -for example- you give out a limited number of badges; this is cost effective, generates engagement and achieves results in the "Scarcity" department.

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Amazing how the standards for human interaction remain consistent even in new forms of communication.

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"Reciprocation" What you give comes back to you.

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Another great post by @NeilPatel

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And more persuasive & influential generally...good read  
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13.  [ricklondon](#) [Follow](#)  
Neil, Thanks for the informative article. I have a question. I see Pete's feed on a smaller social network my wife and I joined, only to realize they do not allow a backlink on one's profile (that means no reciprocity from the social media). The firm emailed my wife and I yesterday to please make a short video on what we like about their network. I didn't want to answer but I wrote back and told them the truth. With all the flaws of the other social media; they DO offer backlinks (which should be the first goodwill gesture of any social media firm).....I emailed back but they ignored me. The membership (slim pickens) tends to share and mention; but it stays in a cycle; not leaking anywhere important and disappears. Waste of time (even though much reciprocity from members).  
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14.  [William Mackey](#) [Follow](#)  
Neil Patel, co-founder of KISSmetrics, discusses six elements of effective persuasion on social media that are based upon concepts described in Robert B. Cialdini's book "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion."  
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15.  [Michael Baker](#) [Follow](#)  
spot on -  
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Pretty simple yet effective.  
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This is a fantastic article. Love the Authority tip.  
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Agree or disagree with any of these?  
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21.  [Roberto Blake](#) [Follow](#)  
Great post, I think this is more than just a way to be persuasive in social media, but a model for how businesses can better demonstrate their value in general.  
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22.  [GINGERTweetz](#) [Follow](#)  
To be successful you must ask people for help.  
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23.  [Ky Kow](#) [Follow](#)  
Love this post. Also love Cialdini's book and highly recommend it. Mashable, please post more on social medi  
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24.  [Sarah Fuhrmann Follow](#)  
Great article. Two ideas here I think cannot be overstated. One: Be yourself: Make your online self be an extension of who you are when people meet you face to face. I work in the fitness business, where WHO the instructor, trainer, business owner is often makes the difference in keeping classes full or not. Offline and online are so inextricably intertwined now, who you are online will often draw people into your offline space as much as anything else because people will search you out online before they ever pass through your physical door.
- Second is implied here but I think critical: give, give, give of your thoughts and advice. Gone are the days where people will pay you for snippets of what you offer. That eBook on training or the six weeks of workouts to blast the holiday pounds should be free and used as a way to build your brand online (if you're charging for it you can bet somebody else is giving it away). Use those online marketing and brand-building opportunities to pull people into your offline space, where you can charge them all you want for memberships, private consulting and training, products, etc.
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25.  [Catchameddler Follow](#)  
Great post Neil-clear, pragmatic, and concise. Keep 'em coming!
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26.  [Patina Marketing Follow](#)  
Neil,
- Great article and I love reading the Kissmetrics Blog! You make some great points in this article and I'd like to add onto it with a few suggestions for marketers to consider:
- 1) Give the first download free then ask the visitor for their contact information if they want more information. Once they know the quality of your work they will be more apt to download, be more engaged and willing to give more.
  - 2) Everyone want to know how many subscribers or followers you have, but no many social bookmarking services provide you with any analytics. When you choose a social booking marking tool, make sure you get analytics tracking with it.
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27.  [josephsasak Follow](#)   
Thanks for these tips! I'll pass this along to my public relations social media class!
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28.  [Mary Elise Chavez Follow](#)   
Good article. I would add that responsiveness, creating a sense of urgency to take action, and being personal add value in this context.
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29.  [Zaira Maqubool Follow](#)   
The article is amazing Neil... Thanks for the insight... But I wonder about the "social proof"!!  
A small or rather local brand which is new in the social media market can never have 500 comments or 100 subscribers etc etc... To achieve this level Reciprocating may take a long time to gather people to understand what the new brand is all about....  
Again authority doesn't take part much in obvious cases of small brands...
- Why is social media explained from a maturity level of the graph always and not from the baby birth to those who are very new to this subject??
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It is good to have what we've learned over the years.
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31.  [Rachael Berkey Follow](#)  
Advice included: Be polite. #Important
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similar but maybe simpler
- <http://like4share.wordpress.com/2011/11/21/how-to-run-your-social-media-business-pageprofile/>
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33.  [Oluseyi Akinkugbe Follow](#)  
some thought provoking points mentioned above in this article, but not show how 'scarcity' would help a brand places social media at the center of an organisations customer service model, if your customers (and by that I actually voice their comment about it on facebook are you telling me you won't be able to respond until thursday next week bet

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awesome post!

Agree! in social media, quantity really matters!

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This is a must-read for all #socialmedia users

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