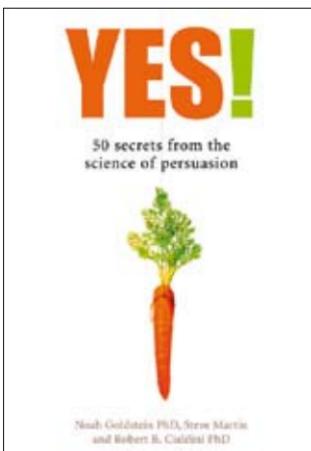


Quiver of tricks for winning

Familiar and new tales on the art of persuasion are sharpened for business relevance.



Yes! 50 secrets from the science of persuasion
 NJ Goldstein, S Martin and RB Cialdini
 Profile Books £8.99

You should read this book. You should read it because you'll enjoy it; because it's perfectly pitched for smart businesspeople; because it's easy to dip into while waiting for a colleague or a plane; and because if you don't, someone else is going to get one over on you. Perhaps they already have.

If you are now feeling more inclined to read *Yes! 50 secrets from the science of persuasion*, that's because I've used a few of the techniques described in this charmingly practical book.

When you stay in a hotel for more than one night, do you re-use your towel? If so, you are in the majority. What the authors of this book set out to discover was how to persuade even more people to re-use their towels – by changing a few words on the sign in the bathroom.

The experiment involved three signs. The first was like the ones

you will have seen, extolling the virtues of preserving the environment. The second honestly explained that most guests re-use their towel at least once. The third stated that most people who had previously stayed in that particular room had re-used their towels.

The results were unequivocal. The second sign boosted re-use of

The lessons may seem obvious, but are rarely put into practice

towels by a mighty 26%. Even more remarkable, the third sign, which referred to the people who had previously used that room, increased re-use by a whopping 33%.

This is a piece of genuinely new research. Equally, the authors have brought to life plenty of other examples of robust research. For

instance, reducing choice can increase sales. When 24 different kinds of jam were on display, only 3% of potential customers bought a pot. When the range was reduced to six kinds, 30% bought one.

Matching your customers can boost sales. When a waiter repeats a customer's order, rather than simply saying 'yes' and writing it

down, their tip increases by 70%.

Say you'll do it and you are much more likely to. When citizens were asked before an election if they would vote, 100% said they would. They didn't, but turnout among those asked about their intentions increased to 86%, compared with 62% for those who weren't asked.

customers

Octavius Black salutes a punchy read

Make it sound scarce and demand will soar. Changing the message on an infomercial from 'operators are waiting, please call now' to 'if operators are busy, please call back' transformed sales. TV viewers were left with the image of phones ringing off the hook and dialled straight away, not wanting to be left out.

The centrepiece of each chapter is research from a proper academic study or well-known business case, but this is no science book.

There are plenty of references to contemporary events: *Sex and the City*; *The Office*; the wedding of Prince Charles to Camilla Parker Bowles; the wife who sold her DJ husband's Lotus Esprit on eBay for 50p when she heard him flirting on the radio with a model – all make an appearance. The trusty greats get plenty of airtime too, from Benjamin Franklin to Henry J Heinz.

The lessons for business may

seem obvious, but they are rarely put into practice. Perhaps that is why the authors end each short chapter with suggestions on how to apply the findings to business.

For those who've read around the subject, especially Cialdini's book, the classic, *Influence: The psychology of persuasion*, there will be much that is familiar: Stanley Milgram and the experiment with people looking up into the sky, groupthink and the *Challenger/Apollo 13* disasters, and Dennis Regan's demonstration of the power a free Coke has on raffle-ticket sales.

Still, there is something satisfying in the familiar; and the punchy, eager prose keeps things ticking along when it might be tempting to ask the intern for a précis.

Don't miss out.

Octavius Black is co-author of *The Mind Gym: Wake your mind up*

THREE OF A KIND PRESENTING... A MORE CONFIDENT YOU



Brilliant Presentation
 Richard Hall
 Prentice Hall £9.99

Hall combines a toolkit, critical pointers and presentation anecdotes from stars in this excellent book. Well-structured and thoughtfully laid out, *Brilliant Presentation* gives tips for presenters at all levels, from novice to expert. Advice includes boosting self-confidence by proclaiming 'I feel totally shameless today'. Rock on! ●●●

●●● best of its kind



The Confident Speaker
 Harrison Monarth and Larina Kase
 McGraw-Hill £10.99

This book is full of tips, though there's a danger they can get lost among the many examples. An over-emphasis on what can go wrong means it starts on a negative note, but the authors work hard to give a fresh perspective on public speaking – you don't always have to picture the audience naked to get over your nerves... ●●

●● could be useful

Presentations That Change Minds

Josh Gordon
 McGraw-Hill £12.99

This is a book to dip into rather than read cover-to-cover. Chapters are helpfully labelled by goals, eg 'Making a financial case' or 'Changing a perception'. There are good insights into audience participation too: plant 'early converts' in the front rows, but the case studies aren't always transferrable to the business world ('Girl scout camp?'). ●●

● of minor interest

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*Drivers should always take professional advice to establish their personal tax position. Price shown is for a Saab 9-3 Airflow 1.8i Saloon. Lease figures shown are based on Saab 9-3 Airflow 1.9 TiD (120bhp) Saloon on a by 35 monthly rentals commencing month 2. An excess mileage charge is payable. For details of full terms and conditions, please refer to the Saab Contract Hire Agreement or call 0845 300 9395. Only available at in place with Saab Great Britain Limited. All rentals quoted are exclusive of VAT, which is payable at the prevailing rate. A £75.00 +vat documentation fee is added to the initial rental for regulated customers. **3 Day Test Drive vehicles are subject to availability and terms and conditions apply. Please refer to 3 Day Test Drive voucher for details. Programme is for 25+ fleets and is available for Mainland UK only. Phone lines open from 8.00am-6.00pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays. Calls may be monitored or recorded for quality and/or training purposes.

(7.2-16.9), EXTRA URBAN 39.2-64.2 (4.4-7.2), COMBINED 26.2-52.3 (5.4-10.8). CO₂ EMISSIONS IN G/KM: 147-259.

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