

# Conversational Pacing and Leading

## A Horse-Sense Approach to Using Persuasion in Sales and Marketing

Tired of trying to convince skeptical prospects to try your products or services? Is there a way to make what you say far more believable?

Can you go so far as to make what you say automatically accepted?

Yes! Absolutely.

It has to do with the way you organize your language-the order in which you say things. And, of course, what you choose to say.

It's simple and effective. And with just a bit of attention and practice, you will find people agreeing with your every word.

There are many different methods taught about bringing a prospect to final agreement. The most common is one offered by almost every sales training program around-the 'yes set'.

The theory behind the 'yes set' is that if you elicit enough 'yeses' during your conversation, your prospect will automatically say 'yes' when you ask for the order or other action.

Here's an example of the 'yes set' as taught in "traditional" sales classes.

Salesman: "Mr. Smith?"

Prospect (Mr. Smith): "Yes."

Salesman: "Mr. John Smith?"

Prospect: "Yes."

Salesman: "Thank you. Mr. Smith, my records indicate that you are the vice-president of purchasing. Is that right?"

Prospect: "Yes."

Salesman: "Great. May I ask you a question?"

Prospect: "Yes."

Salesman: "If I can show you a way to save costs on your inventory, you would be interested in taking a look, wouldn't you?"

And on and on in that manner-both boring and obvious! Yuck!

Do you see the pattern there? What happened for you as you read this or were subjected to it? If you're like me, you were somewhat insulted. You immediately recognized the ploy. You stopped listening and gave your full attention to devising a way to escape!

So, what is the answer? How can you get people to say 'yes' without using outmoded tactics such as this?

It's simple. Learn to use verbal pacing and leading.

Verbal pacing and leading is effective because it automatically sets up an 'unconscious yes set.' And unlike the above example, you can use this in your written marketing materials as well.

Before we investigate just what an 'unconscious yes set' is, let's get clear on some terms:

**Conscious:**

What you are aware of in yourself and your surroundings. What you are paying attention to right now. This includes your thoughts as you read this or prepare to make a presentation, or your awareness of the look on your prospect's face as you talk.

**Unconscious:**

What you are not aware of and not paying attention to right now. An example of this might be the feel of your clothes on your body, the speed of your breathing, or the amount of light available for you to read this.

Unconscious also refers to that which happens automatically. If you are driving down the street and a child runs out in front of you, how long do you have to consider stopping? Probably not long. In fact, your foot seems to hit the brake without any conscious thought or decision on your part!

So, the definition of the unconscious includes both that which you are not aware of and that which happens automatically.

**Yes set:**

As mentioned earlier, a yes set usually refers to a set of questions designed to draw a "yes" response from your prospect. When your prospect says enough yeses during the presentation, she becomes conditioned to agree with you. And when you ask her for the order, she will say "yes".

**Verbal pacing and leading:**

A sophisticated method of associating things that **are** true with things that you'd like people to believe are true. A technique that enables you to eliminate disagreement and get others to agree with you as a natural consequence of listening to what you are saying.

**Pacing:**

Talking about things that can be immediately proven to be true or things that are commonly accepted as true.

**Leading:**

Talking about things that you want the other person to believe that have not as yet been proven true or may not be commonly accepted as true.

Some examples of statements that would qualify as pacing are:

1. Doctor visits are increasing by leaps and bounds in America! There is more heart disease and obesity than ever before.
2. The nutritional value of our food has been decreasing dramatically over the years.
3. Our air, food and water contain many kinds of toxins and poisons.
4. Most people would love to feel better, to have more energy.

5. You must understand the problem before you can find an effective solution.

6. We are all made up of protons, electrons, neutrons.

Now list some of your own pacing items. Remember, these should be things that your prospect has conscious awareness of and are generally seen as true. You may even wish to mention specific articles that recently appeared on the news or in the paper in your prospect's area.

Leads are anything that you want people to believe. Here are some examples of statements that could be considered leads:

1. What we have been doing isn't working. Using commonly available vitamins and minerals isn't enough.

2. If nutritionists and doctors really understood the problem, the population would be getting healthier instead of experiencing an increase in disease.

3. The answer to our problem lies in providing the appropriate electrical matrices to our bodies.

4. There are products that provide these appropriate electrical matrices.

5. You will experience a strong positive benefit to your health by using our products.

What are some of your own leads? What might you want your prospect to believe as true?

Do you begin to see the difference between pacing and leading? Pacing statements are those that are obviously true. You just can't take exception to them! That's what makes them so powerful.

Leading statements are not necessarily proven or may not yet be commonly recognized as true, but they are what you want your prospect to believe.

Now let's look at our elevator speech: "You know how your body's just made of molecules, atoms, electrons? So you're ALL electrical. And we show you how to use state-of-the-art electrical nutrition to get an energy explosion!"

**Pace-** "You know how your body's just made of molecules, atoms, electrons?"

**Pace-** "So you're ALL electrical."

**Lead-** "And we show you how to use state-of-the-art electrical nutrition to get an energy explosion!"

Try reading just the lead statement alone. Leave the "And" off and start with "we". I'll bet you've tried approaching a prospect with an introductory statement that addresses the end result you want. (such as, "are you ready to buy if you get the right price" etc.) Tough sell, wasn't it?

Now precede the lead with the paces-which is the obvious fact that everyone's body is made of molecules, atoms and electrons. After all, we learned that in 7th grade science class. Common knowledge.

Then the next pace-that we are all electrical. It follows logically from the first pace.

After the paces, the lead just seems to grow naturally out of them. Powerful, isn't it

Each time you use a pace, your prospect's unconscious says "yes". Only this is so subtle (albeit powerful) that nobody thinks of it as an assault. Instead, you create an environment that is comfortable. One that supports the other person in moving with you toward your desired end.

When you use these techniques, begin with two or three pacing statements followed by a lead. But don't just rattle off a list of pacing statements or questions. Engage your prospect in a conversation-make it flow easily. Ask for short responses from your prospect, selecting pacing statements that he or she is almost guaranteed to agree with!

Then you may gradually reduce the number of pacing statements before you add a lead. After a while, you can even follow a single pacing statement with a number of leads.

Pace, pace, pace, lead;

Pace, pace, lead, lead;

Pace, lead, lead, lead.

Now, take just a moment and do this. On a sheet of paper, draw a vertical line down the middle. On the left side, list 10 or 15 paces. On the right side, 10 or 15 leads.

Practice out loud, saying two or three paces and then a lead. Then a few more paces and a couple of leads. Keep doing this, with various paces preceding your leads. When done well, this should have a rhythm, with the paces following logically from the previous lead. As you practice, you will find this becomes almost second nature!

Make your leads easy to accept and move your prospect smoothly towards the outcome you want.

Next opportunity you have, use pacing and leading. You'll find agreement everywhere you turn!

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