Compliance

What is compliance?

• Changes in behavior that are elicited by direct requests.

• This is different from conformity, in which changes in behavior happen through implicit social influence.

Fixed Action Patterns

• Sequences of behavior that are “set off” by distinct events in the environment.

• Once they are set off, they run to completion.

Langer Experiment

• Had confederates walk up to people making copies on a copy machine.

• They were instructed to say one of two things:
  - Excuse me. I have five pages. May I use the Xerox Machine?
  - Excuse me. I have five pages. May I use the Xerox Machine because I’m in a rush?

Percent Who Complied

• Excuse me. I have five pages. May I use the Xerox Machine? (60%)

• Excuse me. I have five pages. May I use the Xerox Machine because I’m in a rush? (94%)

• Excuse me. I have five pages. May I use the Xerox Machine because I have to make some copies? (93%)

Langer Explanation

• The word “because” set off a fixed action pattern – people complied with the request mindlessly.

• They were automatically following a “be helpful” norm, all they needed was a reason – any reason.
Cialdini’s 6 Principles of Compliance

- Cialdini studied compliance techniques and suggested that there are 6 well-known norms on which many compliance techniques are based.

1. Reciprocity

- Norm: If someone does you a favor, reciprocate. (a.k.a. If I scratch your back, you'd better scratch mine.)
- Cialdini discussed three common reciprocity techniques...

Pre-Giving

- When a person gives you something, no strings attached, then subsequently makes a request (donation, favor, vote, etc.)

Disabled Vets Study

- In simple mail appeals for donations, the Disabled Veterans Association gets an 18% response rate.
- When they send “free” address labels, they get a 35% response rate!!

Physicians Survey Study

- When doctors were promised $20 for returning a survey, 66% did so.
- When the $20 was sent along with the request the response rate jumped to 78% -- furthermore of those who did not return the survey, only 26% cashed the check.

Door-in-the-Face Technique

- Solicitor first asks for a large request. When the person refuses, a smaller request (the intended request) is made.
Blood Donor Study

- When people asked for a one-time blood donation, 32% complied.
- When first asked to be lifetime donors, then asked for a one time donation, 50% complied!!

That’s not all!!

- Solicitor makes an unreasonable offer, then makes a better one before you have a chance to refuse the first one.
- We’ll give you a lifetime supply of fish heads, but that’s not all… Order now and you’ll receive a complimentary lufa sponge.

2. Social Validation/Social Proof

- Norm: If you are unsure of how to act, do what everyone else is doing.
- This is why TV shows have laugh tracks.
- Examples:
  - everyday, people just like you are...
  - millions have tried the ______
  - I’m just an everyday guy, and I use ..... 
  - Any ad that has actor’s playing “regular people”

Wallet Study (1968)

- Researchers dropped wallets all over Manhattan which contained $2.00, a check for $26.00, and a note which said “I just found your wallet, I’m happy to return it. It feels good to help.”
- The note was either written in standard English, or in broken English by a self-proclaimed recently arrived foreigner

Wallet Study (1968)

- When written by a foreigner, 33% of people returned the wallet.
- When written in standard English, 70% returned the wallet.
- Demonstrates that social proof is more powerful when the model is similar to you. (everyday, people just like you...)

Cross-Cultural Study

- Recent work by Cialdini and colleagues (1999) has shown that social proof is a more effective compliance technique in collectivist societies.
3. Consistency

• Norm: People should be true to their attitudes and prior behaviors, and not contradict themselves.

The Four-Walls Technique

• You surround people with their own attitudes or past behaviors.

• To sell Encyclopedias
  - Are your children important to you?
  - Is your children’s education important to you?
  - Would you do whatever you could to aid in your child’s education?
  - Then how could you not buy these encyclopedias?

Another Four Walls

• To “cure” racism
  - Do you love America?
  - Do you stand by the American ideals?
  - Are you a true patriot?
  - Then how can you be racist since the fundamental axiom of American society is that all people are created equal???

Foot-in-the-Door Technique

• You get the person to agree with an initial trivial request, then ask for a bigger one.

• People will feel pressure to be consistent with past behaviors.

• Opposite of door-in-the-face

Bait-and-Switch Technique

• Offer a great deal to gain initial compliance, then switch it with a worse offer on a related product at the last second.

• Works because people initially decided, “I want this product.” To be consistent, they should still want a similar product, even at a worse price.

Low-Ball Technique

• Similar to bait and switch, except you give a worse offer on the same product.

• People agree to buy something, then when given a steeper price, they feel compelled to pay it because, “I have already established that I want this…”
When consistency isn’t effective.

- Recent work by Cialdini and colleagues (1999) has shown that consistency is not as powerful a norm in collectivist cultures.
- Also, children younger than 6-7 years old are typically not swayed by consistency.
- Both groups are not aware of/focused on individual consistency.

4. Liking

- Norm: If you like someone, you should help them out.
- Ad Examples: sports stars, supermodels, attractive people in general
- One important principle is attractiveness...

Canadian Elections Study (1974)

- Had coders rate the attractiveness of various candidates in Canadian elections at all levels.
- Found that those rated attractive were about 2.5 times as many votes!!

Unconscious social influence and liking

- Unconscious mimicry
  - Chartrand and Bargh (1999)
  - Had participants come to a study on photo descriptions, partnered with a confederate
  - Confederate either shook their foot our touched their face

Unconscious mimicry

- Found that people mimic those they like more
- AND that mimicking others increases their liking of you
- Sales people often mimic customers
5. Authority

- Norm: Do what authority figures say.
- Ad examples:
  - 9 out of 10 dentists agree
  - Using athletes to sell sport-specific products
- Other examples:
  - Ear drops

6. Scarcity

- Norm: Scarce things are more valuable.
- Scarcity has been called the principle which drives all economic behavior.
- Examples:
  - Limited time offer...
  - Act now, while supplies last...
  - Limit 2 per customer...
  - One day sales...
  - Before time runs out...

Possible Explanation

- Reactance Theory (Brehm) – when we feel pressured, or that our freedoms are being threatened, we act to reestablish these freedoms
- When pushed, we push back.

Closing Time...

- Studies have shown that people find the opposite sex more attractive near closing time in bars...
- Studies suggest that it’s the feeling that, time is running out that causes this effect.

What is Social Influence?

- The ways in which people are affected by the real or imagined presence of others.