Book offers tricks to persuade, well, everyone

by Jane Clifford

It's not conniving, it's convincing.

"'Covert Persuasion.' The title alone draws up images of the clandestine and secretive. And obviously, that's what our goal was for this book," write the authors in the book's introduction. "Our first goal is to show you techniques and strategies to persuade others with such skill that your efforts are literally not observable. They are covert.

"Using the powers of 'Covert Persuasion' in your personal and business life is not only ethical and correct, but also necessary to your overall success."

TACTICS AND TRICKS - The authors of 'Covert Persuasion' say its advice can be helpful to everyone, from salespeople who want to increase their sales to office workers who want to get their co-workers to agree with them. CNS Photo.Although the publisher of "Covert Persuasion: Psychological Tactics and Tricks to Win the Game" (Wiley, $22) bills it as a book that shows "how salespeople can turn 'no' into 'yes," authors James Speakman and Kevin Hogan envision a more widespread readership.

"It's really a book for every single person," said Speakman, a motivational speaker and corporate trainer, who said that the "tactics and tricks" offered in "Covert Persuasion" go beyond product sales and funds solicitation. The advice found on its pages would be helpful "even to people in an office situation who want to get their co-workers to agree with them."

Speakman said he spent five years researching the book and planning it with Hogan, the author of several motivational volumes. He said he read or listened to 2,400 motivational books and tapes to cull from them ideas that were universal in nature, and combined that information with his own original research.

"I would try these tactics on people - co-workers, clerks in stores," said Speakman. "I'd do anything I could to find out if these things really worked."

The result is a concise, "quick-hit" volume, claimed Speakman, filled with case histories, that is based on the authors' belief that you can rationally persuade people to irrationally make the choices you want them to make.

SUBCONSCIOUS LEVEL

"When we make decisions, we like to think we weigh the options carefully, look at all the possibilities, and make the best choice based on a rational examination of the facts," Speakman and Hogan write in their introduction. "But, in truth, much of our decision-making happens on a subconscious level based on feelings we might not even be aware of. Understanding and managing those subconscious feelings is the key to the art of persuasion."

The authors provide more than 50 "Covert Persuasion Tactics," dozens of "Covert Persuasion Tricks" and more than a few "Covert Persuasion Facts" that help readers devise a system of persuasion upon which they can base their action and speech. Hogan and Speakman explain how to use body language, speech patterns, vocabulary, and emotion to get people to invest themselves or their money in an argument or a sale.

The tactics sound secretive, the authors admit. They are.

"When you master these techniques and put them to use, no one will even notice your tactics," the authors write. But Speakman said that in reality the techniques in the book are not immoral or unethical - they simply are an effective use of the facts of human nature that the authors outline.

"Are you doing something sneaky or underhanded? No," said Speakman. "A hammer is designed to hit a nail. I can also be used to hit a head. If you do use these things with evil intent, it'll come back to hit you on the head."

COVERT PERSUASION FACTS

- "'No' is an instant reaction and doesn't mean anything."

- "In gullible people, it is possible to use up resources for resistance."

- "Initially people don't buy into ideas, products, services, candidates, or causes - they buy into you!"

COVERT PERSUASION TACTICS

- "Rapidly build resonant rapport."

- "Synchronize posture and movement."

- "Share part of you with them."

- "Use covert hypnotic language patterns."

- "Lower your voice at the right moment."

COVERT PERSUASION TRICKS

- "Use the word 'because' when answering anything asked of you, and you'll find people agreeing with you much more often. Use the word 'because' when asking someone to comply with your request. People have an almost instant positive response to this word."

- "Be eager to point out any negative aspects of your proposal. This accomplishes two important things. First, it makes you appear far more trustworthy, and second, it allows your target to be set at ease because you are doing his job of finding drawbacks in the proposal."

- "People only seek evidence that supports their existing beliefs. So, starting from what you know they believe, give them something they 'know is true' and then expand that toward your ultimate goal."

- "People will take personal credit for successes but blame failures on the situation or other people. People don't like to admit they are wrong. Structure you argument so they don't ever have to admit they were wrong."

- "Present the product they should buy, last. The target is compelled to own something and normally will take the last option."

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