

Persuasion & Influence — Workbook

This workbook translates the course frameworks into hands-on practice for your actual professional context. Each section pairs directly with a course module and includes exercises, structured worksheets, and checklists you can use before or after high-stakes conversations, proposals, or change initiatives. Complete it in sequence the first time; return to individual sections as reference before specific situations.

The Science of Why People Say Yes

Internalise dual-process theory and Cialdini's principles by mapping them to real people and situations in your own professional life.

Exercise: System 1 vs. System 2 Audit

Think of your three most important upcoming influence situations. For each, diagnose which cognitive system your audience is likely running when they receive your message, then identify one adjustment to your approach.

- Describe the situation and audience: who are they, what is the context, what decision do you need them to make?

- What cues suggest they will be in System 1 mode (stress, time pressure, emotional stake, low domain familiarity)?

- What cues suggest they will be in System 2 mode (high expertise, low time pressure, analytical preference)?

- Given your diagnosis, what is one concrete change to your message — in format, sequence, or content — that better matches their likely cognitive mode?

Worksheet: Cialdini Principle Mapper

For a specific, real influence situation you are currently facing, complete each row to identify which principles are already working for you and which need activation.

Situation description (who, what, what you need)

Reciprocity — what value have I already given this person? What could I give before the ask?

Commitment — what small yeses have they already given? What micro-yes could I seek first?

Social proof — who does this person look to? Can I reference their peers or cite relevant adoption data?

Authority — what credentials or third-party endorsements can I legitimately signal?

Liking — what do we genuinely have in common? Have I invested enough in the relationship first?

Scarcity — is there a genuine constraint (time, access, capacity) I can communicate honestly?

Unity — what shared identity or in-group membership can I authentically invoke?

Top two principles I will lead with and why

Checklist: Ethics Checkpoint Before Every Ask

- I can pass the Transparency Test: the other person would still agree if they knew every technique I used
- I can pass the Benefit Test: the outcome genuinely serves their interests, not only mine
- I can pass the Repeatability Test: this approach would not erode the relationship over repeated use
- I am not manufacturing false urgency, false social proof, or false scarcity
- I have given genuine value before making this ask
- I am prepared to hear no and maintain the relationship regardless

Framing, Storytelling, and the Architecture of a Compelling Argument

Build a complete persuasive message using Aristotle's triangle, framing principles, and Monroe's Motivated Sequence — applied to your specific situation.

Exercise: Aristotle Triangle Message Builder

Choose one upcoming pitch, proposal, or difficult conversation. Build the three legs of your argument using the prompts below. Then sequence them: ethos opener, pathos bridge, logos close.

- Ethos: what is your most credible signal of expertise or track record for THIS specific audience? (one sentence, specific, verifiable)

- Pathos: write a 3-sentence story or vivid scenario that makes the problem or opportunity feel real and personal for this audience

- Logos: what is your single strongest data point or case study, and what does it prove? (resist listing five — choose one)

- Write the opening 100 words of your message sequencing all three: ethos first, pathos second, logos third

Worksheet: Monroe's Motivated Sequence Planner

Complete all five fields for your next high-stakes communication — a presentation, proposal email, or important meeting. Use the word-count guides as targets, not hard limits.

Attention (target: 1-2 sentences): striking stat, question, or story opener that interrupts the default state

Need (target: 2-3 sentences): specific problem + who it affects + what it is costing right now

Satisfaction (target: 3-4 sentences): your solution + three evidence-backed benefits + one case study or data cite

Visualization (target: 1-2 sentences): future success state OR cost of continued inaction — which is stronger for this audience?

Action (target: 1 sentence): single specific ask + exact next step + timeline

Cialdini principle this structure should most activate and why

Checklist: Framing Audit Before Sending or Presenting

- I have identified whether loss framing or gain framing is more relevant to this audience
- I have set my anchor number or reference point deliberately and early
- I have designed the comparison set so my offer sits next to a clearly inferior alternative, not a similar one
- I have considered what the audience is thinking about immediately before receiving my message and primed the context accordingly
- My opening sentence states the recommendation or key point — not background context
- I have one memorable artefact (stat, story, or visual) that this audience will repeat to others

Reading Your Audience and Overcoming Resistance

Develop your diagnostic muscle for identifying resistance type and decision-making style, and build a personalised commitment ladder for your most important current initiative.

Exercise: Resistance Root-Cause Diagnosis

Identify one person or group who is currently resistant to something you are trying to advance. Use the four-category model to diagnose the real source and plan the targeted response.

- Describe the person, the request, and what they have said or done that signals resistance

- Review the four categories: logical, emotional, social, structural. Which signal words or behaviours match? What is your primary diagnosis?

- What is the one diagnostic question you would ask to confirm your diagnosis before responding?

- Given your diagnosis, what is one specific response approach — and what would you explicitly stop doing that was targeted at the wrong resistance type?

Worksheet: Stakeholder Archetype and Approach Planner

For each key stakeholder in your current initiative, identify their archetype and plan your customised approach. Complete one row per stakeholder.

Stakeholder name and role

Archetype (Analyst / Driver / Amiable / Expressive) and the observable signals that led to this assessment

What they most want from this interaction (results, data, consensus, vision)

Top Cialdini lever for this archetype

How I will adjust my communication format, sequence, and pace for this person

The one thing I must not do with this archetype (e.g., don't pressure an Analyst, don't bury the lead for a Driver)

Checklist: Commitment Ladder Design Checklist

- I have identified my ultimate goal — the full commitment I am working toward
- I have designed at least four rungs between the current state and the full commitment
- Each rung is genuine — it delivers real value and is not merely a manipulation tactic
- Each rung is slightly larger than the previous but small enough to feel comfortable
- Each yes will be made somewhat public or explicit so consistency pressure activates
- I have planned my timing — the gap between rungs allows the previous commitment to solidify
- I am prepared to stop at any rung if the person signals that the fit is not real

Influencing in High-Stakes Contexts

Apply the complete toolkit to your hardest real-world scenarios — executive asks, consultative influence, and building cross-functional coalitions.

Exercise: Executive Ask: PREP Framework Draft

Identify one upcoming request to a senior decision-maker. Write your PREP structure in the space provided, then read it aloud and time it — it should take under 90 seconds.

- Position (one sentence): state your recommendation immediately, with no context preamble

- Reason (one sentence): your single strongest argument — not all arguments, just the most resonant one for this specific executive

- Evidence (one sentence): one specific, memorable data point, case study cite, or analogous precedent

- Position again + ask (one sentence): restate the recommendation and specify the exact decision, budget, or action you need

Worksheet: SPIN Question Preparation Sheet

Prepare for your next high-stakes consultative conversation by writing out your SPIN questions in advance. Use the column structure for each question type. Aim for quality over quantity — fewer, sharper questions outperform long lists.

Situation questions (2-3): factual, confirms you did homework, gathers current-state context

Problem questions (3-4): surfaces dissatisfaction and pain — what are the challenges, friction points, recurring issues?

Implication questions (4-5): connects the problem to downstream costs — what does this mean for output, budget, timeline, morale, growth?

Need-payoff questions (1-2): asks the person to articulate the value of the solution themselves — what would it mean to resolve this?

After the meeting: which questions generated the most energy and why? What would I change next time?

Checklist: Coalition Building Launch Checklist

- I have mapped all stakeholders and identified 3-5 credible early adopters who, if visibly supportive, would move the mainstream
- I have identified the 1-2 most likely blockers and planned a private, direct conversation with each before any public forum
- I have customised my argument for each early adopter based on their archetype and specific interests
- I have sequenced my outreach from highest-credibility to broadest-reach

I have a plan for making early adopters' support visible — a meeting comment, an email cc, a written endorsement

I have defined what 13-18% adoption looks like in my context and what that milestone will unlock

I have connected my initiative to at least one existing organisational priority that senior leaders have already publicly committed to

Your Action Plan

1. Before your next important ask, run the System 1 vs. System 2 diagnostic and write one sentence describing your audience's likely cognitive state at the moment they receive your message
2. Map Cialdini's seven principles to your current influence situation and identify the two most relevant levers — activate both in your next interaction
3. Apply the Transparency Test, Benefit Test, and Repeatability Test to any persuasion tactic you are uncertain about before using it
4. Rewrite your next pitch, proposal, or difficult conversation using the Aristotle triangle sequence: ethos opener, pathos bridge, logos close
5. For your most important current initiative, complete the Monroe's Motivated Sequence Planner and get your structure to 400 words or under
6. Diagnose the source of resistance from your most resistant stakeholder using the four-category model and change your response approach accordingly
7. Identify the archetype of your three most important stakeholders and adjust your communication format and sequencing for each
8. Design a commitment ladder for your most important current initiative — map at least four rungs between current state and full commitment
9. Prepare a PREP script for your next executive ask and rehearse it to under 90 seconds
10. Map the coalition for your next cross-functional initiative: identify your top three early adopters, your top two blockers, and your outreach sequence

