Supervisor Secret: Powerful Secrets of Persuasion

As “safety people” we spend a good deal of our time consciously or unconsciously trying to persuade others. We try to persuade management to support and fund safety initiatives. We try and persuade supervisors to enforce safety rules. We try and persuade workers to follow those same safety rules.

In his article, Powerful Secrets of Persuasion, speaker, trainer, and coach James Hurford, DTM, he goes over 20 ways to get people to take action.

1. **If people don’t trust you, they won’t listen to you** – trust underpins everything you say and do. Your reliability, confidence, credence and assurance – without them, you are lost.
2. **We like people who are similar to us**– people prefer to say ‘yes’ to people they like. That’s why, before getting down to business, it is best to talk about who you are, what you do and, if possible, find some common ground or pay a genuine compliment.
3. **Put yourself in their shoes**– if you think about yourself and what you want all the time, you’re never going to persuade. Learn how to consistently talk to people about them; do that and you’ll have their attention.
4. **Give a little something to get a little something in return**– we’re all wired to return favors. The rule of reciprocity is so strong that by giving something, doing a favor, making a concession, providing small gestures of consideration to others, you’ll find that others will feel compelled to return your kindness.
5. **What we see is just as important as what we hear**– like it or not, people judge you at first glance. Your body language, behavior, character, gestures and the way you are dressed all come into play. They have a lasting impact on your ability to persuade others – make the most of them.

6. **Confidence and certainty are compelling** – we all have a need for certainty, and confidence is the outward sign of inner certainty. You will always be able to persuade others if you really believe in what you do.
7. **Have authority** – people listen to experts. They give their trust, and money to them every day. Because our reaction to authority is so powerful and immediate, by having it you can to a get 'yes' quicker and more often.
8. **Knowledge is power**– know your stuff.
9. **Build your reputation**– your reputation is based on your past. Your integrity, accomplishments and character are all important when you are trying to influence. When it comes to influence, your reputation is your biggest asset.
10. **Physical attractiveness**– there's no getting away from it, people like to identify with attractive people. While you don't have to be a model (which can be distracting) you should make the most of how you look.
11. **Make it scarce** – people want more of the things there are less of. If you want somebody to act, you must make them feel they will lose out if they don't, even if that object is you.
12. **Instill a sense of urgency**– persuade people in the present. If they don't do what you want them to do right away, then they'll never do it in the future.
13. **Establish rapport**– when people feel more comfortable with you they are more open to your suggestion. Listen, ask open ended questions, empower people, pay compliments, use humor – you'll find people will warm to you.
14. **Be persistent** – if you want to persuade someone, don't give up. Ultimately, the one who persists will be the most persuasive. Persistence is an essential element of persuasion – both in business and in life.
15. **Be flexible with your response**– the person with the greatest flexibility of behavior will have the most influence in any situation. Flexibility will enable you to achieve your outcome.
16. **Stay calm, keep your emotions in check**– people turn to those in control of their emotions, especially in times of

conflict, pressure or stress. Would you ever look up to a leader who panics under pressure?

17. **Pick your battles**– persuasive people understand that most conversations don't require getting someone to do or accept something. Aggressive pushers put people on the defensive, while truly persuasive people understand their power and use it sparingly.
18. **Listen more than you speak** – you can't persuade or convince others, if you don't know the other side of the argument. Persuasive people are constantly listening to you and not themselves. They're listening for objections, connections and moments of agreement – common ground they can capitalize on.
19. **Engage with people**– smile, establish direct eye contact and speak firmly and clearly, at a slow pace – all of this will help them relax and engage with you, which in turn will make them more receptive to you and your ideas.
20. **Try to eliminate fear** – whether you're speaking one-to-one, to a group of people or a large audience – people pick up on nervousness. It creates a barrier to persuasion. Stop thinking you're not good enough or you haven't got what it takes. We can all get better and no one is perfect.