

**The Lecture Contains:**

- ☰ Understanding compliance
- ☰ Robert Cialdini's Study of 'compliance professionals'
- ☰ Techniques based on Friendship/liking: ingratiation
- ☰ Techniques based on commitment and consistency
- ☰ Foot-in-the-door Technique
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## Understanding compliance

- Compliance is the process of getting one's direct request accepted by another person. There are several ways of gaining compliance that have been researched and found out to be effective. In this lecture, we will try to learn the following ways of gaining compliance :
  - Robert Cialdini' (1994) six basic principles of gaining compliance (Cialdini, 1994) :
  - Techniques based on Friendship/liking: ingratiation
  - Techniques based on commitment and consistency
  - Techniques based on reciprocity

### Robert Cialdini's Study of 'compliance professionals'

- Robert Cialdini conducted an interesting study in which he tried to observe 'compliance professionals' whose success depended on their ability to get others to say 'yes'. Cialdini worked as one such professional in organizations by concealing his identity as a social psychologist. His efforts led him to make sense of the ways to gain compliance that he reported as the six basic principles of gaining compliance (Cialdini, 1994) :
  - **Friendship/liking** : We comply to friends or people we like rather than strangers.
  - **Commitment and consistency** : Once committed to a stand or decision, we generally comply to requests that are consistent with that stand.
  - **Scarcity** : If the request refers to 'disappearing opportunities', there are greater chances that we comply to that request.
  - **Reciprocity** : We generally like to accept the request of a person who has done some favour to us or has accepted our request in the past.
  - **Social validation** : We comply to requests if we know that people similar to us have also complied to the same request.
  - **Authority** : We generally comply to requests coming from persons with authority or someone who appears to be like him or her.

### Techniques based on Friendship/liking: ingratiation

- Ingratiation is the technique of getting others to like us and thereby, comply. For this purpose, the following techniques are used by the person who makes request :
  - **Self-enhancing technique** : These techniques include improving one's appearance, presenting positive non-verbal cues (smiling or having a frequent eye contact), and associating oneself with incidents or people the target person likes.
  - **Other-enhancing techniques** : These techniques include flattery, agreeing with the target person, expressions of interest in them, giving them some gift.

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### Techniques based on commitment and consistency

- As observed earlier, once committed to a stand or decision, a person generally comply to requests that are consistent with that stand. Following are techniques utilized for under this broader technique :
  - Foot-in-the-door Technique – when a smaller request is accepted, a larger one is presented
  - Lowball technique – deal is changed or made less attractive when it is accepted by a person
  - Bait-and-switch technique – items offered for sale is unavailable, therefore, what is available is accepted.
- Let us try to understand each of these techniques in some greater details.

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### Foot-in-the-door Technique

- In their famous study, Freedman and Fraser (1966) actually found out that when their smaller request was accepted, a larger one presented was also accepted by a sizable number of participants.
- In the first phase of the study, they arranged to make telephone calls to strangers with a small request of asking about the brands of soap used in their (strangers') household. Later, after a few days, the same people who shared the brand of soap they used were presented a larger request of allowing one representative of the caller to search the house to make a list of all the brands of items used in the house.
- A total of 52.8% of the participants who had complied to the initial smaller request also complied to the larger request presented to them later. However, only 22.2% of participants complied a another group when the larger request was presented without being requested for the initial smaller request.

### Lowball technique

- In another interesting study, Cialdini et al, (1978) tried to test the hypothesis that if the deal is changed or made less attractive when it is accepted by a person, he/she would still comply.
- The researchers requested the students in a university to participate in a psychology experiment. When they agreed, they were told that the experiment would begin at 7 a.m. Although, it was difficult to get up early and then get ready to come to the university early in the morning, almost all the participants complied for the changed request too. On the other hand, in another group, where the students were only given the second request, much lesser percentage of student agreed to come the early morning experiment.



### **Bait-and-switch**

- Another technique that is utilized particularly in marketplace is the bait-and-switch technique. In this technique, the salesman usually offers an item for sale. Once the person wants to purchase it, he is told by the salesman that the item offered for sale is unavailable. Instead, he asks the person to purchase the other item of a similar kind or purpose. Due to commitment and consistency, it is often observed that the new offer is accepted.

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### Techniques based on reciprocity

- As noted earlier, reciprocity is a frequently used technique to gain compliance through an exchange of favours. Following the ways in which it is applied :
  - Door-in-the-face technique – from larger to smaller requests
  - That's-not-all technique – additional benefits offered before making a decision
  - Foot-in-the-mouth technique – establishing some kind of relationship with the target person

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### Door-in-the-face technique

- In an experiment on college students, Cialdini et al. (1975) asked them to serve as unpaid counsellors to juvenile delinquents two hours a week for the next two years. No students complied to this request. But, then the second time, a much smaller request was made by inquiring with them whether they would take a group of delinquents for a two-hour trip to the zoo, 50% of the participants agreed. The relief associated with scaling down of the request may be a strong reason for complying. In another group, where only the second request was presented, less than 17% agreed to that.

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### **That's-not-all technique**

- Many a time, in the market place or in other spheres of social life, we are presented with additional benefits before making a decision to seek compliance from us. Often, such an incidence is encountered in the shops, where, to seek compliance, the shopkeeper keeps making additional offers or discounts to gain our compliance about purchasing the product.

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### Foot-in-the-mouth technique

- Aune & Basil's (1994) study on establishing some kind of relationship with the target person to seek compliance provides an example for this technique where the assumption is that acknowledging being related gives positive feeling that is exchanged for a favour. The researchers asked the college students to contribute to a charitable organization. But, before asking for monetary contribution, they asked the students, "Are you a student ? Oh, that's great, so am I". It was noted that 25.5% of the students complied. In the control group, where the students were only asked for the monetary help, only 9.8% of students complied.

