Let’s take a look at an example of the use of anchoring when selling the idea of need, when the prospect is considering an energy saving product or service:

The customer mentions what their current heating bills are, and the salesperson responds with raised eyebrows and a “Wow!”

The word “wow” and the raised eyebrows (remember we told you this was a surprise statement) represent someone’s reaction to a situation or circumstance that is intolerable and requires a solution. When combined properly they send a message which is received and recognized in the brain.

As the interaction proceeds – when similar critical issues are disclosed by the customer – the word “wow” and the raised eyebrow are repeated.

Again, this establishes that the salesperson that is knowledgeable in the area of discussion is shocked at the circumstances with which the prospect is dealing.

To reinforce the point about casual or less effective communication, ask yourself, “What do many people say to register shock when hearing of similar circumstances?” Search your past experiences or your own response system.

The average response may sound like this:

· “My goodness, that’s awful, it doesn’t seem fair.”
· “Well, energy costs are rising for everyone; I have a friend whose heating bill is even higher.”
· “Aren’t you glad you don’t live in (and name an area with colder winters.)”

While these statements may seem sympathetic and compassionate, they lack the words and gestures to trigger the mental processing which will give you a desired outcome.

Here is another example of anchoring. While communicating with another party they tell you that they solved a problem and that the outcome was consistent with their needs.
You respond by saying, “That sounds like a wise decision,” while at the same time using two fingers to tap your right temple to signify a wise decision and a great outcome. Then, in the process of making your suggestion or presenting your idea, you state, “and most people who use the tactic tell us it was a wise decision.” Again, tap your right temple with two fingers.

Can you envision how someone might see and hear this combination?

Here is another example of the power of this technique.

B. F. Skinner, the famous behavioral scientist and researcher, tells the story of an eminent yet rather stern and unsmiling professor he had during his graduate studies.

Dr. Skinner, together with several fellow students, concocted an experiment which they also intended to be a harmless joke.

Dr. Skinner said the professor had the habit of writing on the blackboard at a slight angle, left to right, but slightly downhill. Skinner went on to say that each time the professor wrote on the board and then turned to the class, he (Skinner) and his friends who were positioned in the front row nodded and gave a big smile.

As the semester wore on they recruited other students in the class to do the same.

Dr. Skinner explained that they did not do this every time the professor wrote; it occurred maybe 6 or 7 times per class. He said that by the end of the semester when the professor turned to face the class, he smiled and his downhill slanted writing almost resembled a 90 degree angle.

In short, they sent this wordless message via anchoring, “We like or appreciate your style.” The professor subconsciously absorbed that message and repeated the affirmed and anchored behavior.

**Anchors depend on strong emotions to work.** To use them effectively requires practice. However, don’t underestimate their value, for they represent silent applause in their original use. They are a viable method to reinforce ideas when you are presenting, counseling, speaking or selling.

Take time out of every day to develop effective communication skills and the results will astound you!

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