

Turning Persuasion from an Art into a Science – *Robert Cialdini (Psychology), Arizona State University (USA)*

The ability to persuade – to capture the audience, convince the undecided, and convert the opposition – has always been a precious skill. But, over the past several decades, the delicate art of personal persuasion has been transformed into the solid science of social influence. In my presentation, I will describe six scientifically-grounded principles that increase the likelihood that people will respond favorably to a request or persuasive communication. The principles are:

- **Reciprocation.** People are more willing to comply with requests (for favors, services, information, concessions, etc.) from those who have provided such things first.
- **Commitment/ Consistency.** People are more willing to be moved in a particular direction if they see it as consistent with an existing commitment.
- **Authority.** People are more willing to follow the directions or recommendations of a communicator to whom they attribute relevant authority or expertise.
- **Social Proof.** People are more willing to take a recommended action if they see evidence that many others, especially similar others, are taking it.
- **Scarcity.** People find objects and opportunities more attractive to the degree that they are scarce, rare, or dwindling in availability.
- **Linking/ friendship.** People prefer to say yes to those they know and like.

The presentation will illustrate how these six universal principles of influence can be harnessed to generate high levels of change in recipients of persuasive messages. Special emphasis will be given to a recent study of how to persuade individuals to take action to conserve energy and preserve the environment. Appeals that incorporated these principles proved more successful than conventional approaches.