

Competitive Persuasion exposes the attitude and approach of those who pull the strings of society's elite, the operators who influence the influencers: the dealmakers. Written by Lawrence Rosenberg, the book reveals exactly how to infiltrate any organization as agent, consultant or salesman, and rise to dominate it. Competitive Persuasion is the step-by-step guide for conquering life, for bending the world to your will, and getting what you want, when you want it.

Competitive Persuasion - Why Dealmakers, Closers and Negotiators Rule the World

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LAWRENCE ROSENBERG



**WHY DEALMAKERS, CLOSERS & NEGOTIATORS
RULE THE WORLD**

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A Breed Apart

Business is more exciting than any game - Lord Beaverbrook.

The Buddhist Patimokkha, the Kshatriyan Code, the Viking “Code of Vengeance,” the Rule of Saint Benedict, the Samurai Bushido – unconventional and extraordinary codes of conduct, respected as law and worshipped as ideology. Throughout history, particularly eccentric, effective or esteemed sects have sanctified, as a matter of pride and as essential to performance, commandments and dictums which guarantee everything from enlightenment to perfection, redemption to revelation. From philosophers to monastics, tradesman to soldiers, those that possess expert knowledge, unique capabilities or wield uncommon influence and power typically cultivate tenets particular to their success or invaluable to their cause. The more extreme, heroic, radical or exceptionally skilled a group’s adherents, the more its codes of conduct assume a life of their own, occasionally surviving the ages as legend or myth, but cherished nonetheless as a singular and perfect approach to life, work or spirit for the disciplined and devout seeking excellence. Having a creed or “value system” is not only practical as a learnable set of best practices to be passed down to future generations of the devoted, it is an homage to the well-regarded traditions and long admired deeds of distinguished ancestors and glorified brethren – superior habits commemorated as doctrine and consecrated as code for those that seek to walk a similar path.

Although much of antiquity’s societal structure and laws were influenced by the religious and warrior elite, no current class of men has impacted contemporary ideals more than the industrial titans and inventor entrepreneurs of the last hundred years. Astor, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Edison, Ford, Gates, Jobs – bold, single-minded men

whose ideas, vision and striving gave birth to an age of innovation and prosperity the likes of which no civilization has ever progressed through so rapidly. And, just as the customs and dogmata of spiritual purists, lords of war and fraternal orders from time immemorial been inscribed and preserved, so too have the philosophies and methods of the giants of free enterprise been meticulously studied and duly recorded (as much out of curiosity for how such rare individuals think as to educate and train future business pioneers and leaders). The route to such stratospheric success has been well documented in magazines and newspapers from *Forbes*, *Fortune* and the *Wall Street Journal*, to published classics such as Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* and Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* and *The Law of Success*. Yet, among this coterie of corporate Goliaths and billionaire visionaries prowls a keen and cunning class of businessman perhaps more clever than the captains of industry they counsel, bankroll or bargain with – an operator that influences the influencers, that negotiates their moves, their buyouts and mergers: *the dealmaker*.

Modern day raiders and kingmakers, today's masters of the universe, descend from a time when a historic confluence of revolutionary advances in communication technology (telegraph, ticker tape, telephone) collided with a tipping point of industrial innovation and an accumulation of private wealth the likes of which the world had never seen. The ability to acquire and transmit information accurately and quickly, to communicate its value and trade, sell or deal against it just as fast, gave birth to a new class of men adept at evaluating nascent information, finding openings and creating opportunities where none had been previously apparent. Shrewd prognosticators, enlightened by a new age of data and markets, saw possibilities not just in the backing of trailblazing inventions or discoveries, but in the momentum of leveraging shares and combining companies. Andrew Carnegie, James Pierpont Morgan and Jason "Jay" Gould, legendary opportunists who excelled in the

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subsuming of corporations and the buyout of everyone from peers to competitors at the right time and at the right price, forged behemoth conglomerates and powerful monopolies. This pioneering time in American history saw a new breed of capitalist adventurer who, through a unique brand of business acumen, financial savvy and brilliant salesmanship, carved out business deals staggering in size and scope, and far reaching in their implications. From Charles M. Schwab, referred to by Thomas Edison as the “master hustler,” and his deft negotiation of the deal that formed the world’s first billion dollar company, U.S. Steel, to J.P. Morgan’s takeover of the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, these mega deals constructed at the height of the industrial era were a portent of the billion dollar power plays and one-upmanship that would define “big business” in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Contemporary investors, financiers and dream merchants, the dealmakers of our day and age can, like the companies they buy, sell or merge, and the CEOs and boards of directors they advise, affect entire economies and earn billions themselves. T. Boone Pickens’ controversial bid for Gulf Oil (an unprecedented play for what was then the tenth largest company in the U.S. at the time), Carl Icahn’s hostile takeover of TWA, Ron Perelman’s junk bond buyout of Revlon, and Henry Kravis’ historic leveraged buyout of RJR Nabisco (to this day the largest LBO in history when adjusted for inflation), are but a few examples of how dealmakers and their exploits often overshadow the industrialists and entrepreneurs whose corporations they control, maneuver or take apart.

From large scale industry shifting events to inconspicuous land deals on the outskirts of nowhere, deal-making is a hallmark of fast and free markets, yet subject to the politics of the time, those that outwit and out-negotiate their way to acquiring riches and resources can easily become the business world’s most vilified actors. However revered or reviled their antics and exploits, dealmakers, what they are capable of and what they represent, are central to a hearty and

booming economy, and vital to progress. The transactions that form dominant companies or dismantle badly managed ones, the deals that revolutionize old industries or forge new business lines, exploit inefficiency and leverage weakness, ensuring industry evolves and does not pander. When left to roam the plains and hunt unrestricted by specious, self-serving restraints, or without the distraction imposed by the necessity to curry favor, the message to the marketplace is loud and clear:

If you cannot compete you will be swallowed whole or bought, broken up and sold for parts – improvement and efficiency is your only protection.

Innovate or die.

Free of political yoking and artificial controls, individuals and businesses left to trade and transact without obstruction will, sans the intrusion of artificially cheap credit and support for the unsustainable, reward the prolific and expunge the profligate. Those that are excessively leveraged, mismanage risk or are unproductive and wasteful will be weeded out of existence. And for the few that somehow escape the marketplace's hawks and lions, the financial system's much-maligned hyenas, the shorts, will expose the failings of the reckless and pick them off one by one.

Besides searching for openings, gaps and weakness, ridding the market of the inefficient and improvident, dealmakers also pursue the possible, those with promise and potential. Incubators, angels and venture capitalists, those early in, frontline money men, vet tens of thousands of business proposals, and hear just as many "elevator" pitches, in search of promising start-ups or the next ground-breaking game changer. The investment machinery that exists to fund the next tech juggernaut, medical innovation or unique, efficient industrial application, is populated by an array of bright minds, forward thinkers

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and innovative competitors – enough to rival the Edisons, Marconis or Henry Fords of our time.

Devoid of interference and the distortion of a heavy handed, meddlesome bureaucracy, incentivized to tear down the cumbersome and breathe life into the auspicious, dealmakers ensure raw, chaste, market integrity. Self-interested, brutally honest action conducted in pure Darwinian fashion, however distasteful to some, guarantees only the lean, mean and best performing organizations prosper, that the survivors propagate and multiply, while the ungainly get eaten or deconstructed. Ruthless and harsh yes, but the unbridled appetite and hardened hearts of those moving markets ensures an “on your toes” system – their activity and voraciousness (or lack thereof) affording analysts and pundits alike the best of economic barometers. Deal flow both gauges the action and defines the state of play, its momentum and magnitude a signal that investor confidence is high and the economy upbeat.

The ethos of uncompromised deal-making, and its institutionalization as a fundamental tenet of good business, can birth an entrepreneurial class and culture – one that is devoted to the new, the next and the novel. A vigorous financial system thriving with deals inspires a world of pioneers from the accountant turned buy-out impresario to the self-starter on the street shucking t-shirts and souvenirs to tourists. From the frantic shouting on the floor of the NYSE to the electricity of a fast paced auction, whether undertaken by the princes of private equity or a lone flea market trader, deal-making may not be the engine of the economy, but the energy, excitement and bustling activity generated by those playing the game provides the all-important fuel and spark.

Originally associated with those engaged in steering mergers, acquisitions and corporate takeovers, a dealmaker, no matter the landscape he traverses, has always been defined by a certain maverick confidence. Agile businessmen who do not see recompense or reward lest the transactions they drive appreciate or close, are natural, go-for-

broke risk takers, but as opposed to the gamblers and speculators they so closely resemble, it is their decisive sway over events and people that give them, as opposed to the house, a definitive advantage. Their ability to unearth or create opportunity, influence opinion and close business sets them apart from the mere chancers and punters – those who labor endlessly at the mercy of a stacked deck.

Of all a dealmaker's extraordinary capabilities, however, it is their power to push and persuade, to "sell the deal," that truly separates this breed of businessman apart. The great deal-making impresarios, CEOs and financiers are all one thing if they are anything – they are all terrific salesmen. And, conversely, the best salesmen often make the ultimate entrepreneurs, magnates and moguls. From Thomas Watson, the "selling machine" whose enormous success as a cash register salesman in the early 1900s led to a senior role with the tabulating device company he would later lead and rename IBM, to Li-KaShing the Hong Kong magnate known as "Superman," who parlayed a door-to-door sales career into a ports and telecoms empire, and a \$21 billion personal fortune; from William Wrigley Jr., the restless traveling salesman who went from selling soap to building an empire out of the free gift of gum he would offer his prospective customers, to the gargantuan success of Ray Kroc, the milkshake machine salesman who cut a deal to buy out his client the McDonald brothers and create the most successful franchise in history, salesmen often rule the business world.

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