

Better Practice Building and Marketing Master Class Series

The Force Multipliers of Persuasion & Influence

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## **Business Force Multiplier Special Report: How Interrogators, Special Forces Operators, and Hostage Negotiators Would Build a More Profitable AND Client Focused Business**

### **16 Models Of Interrogation And How They Apply To Building, Managing and Marketing A Successful Business or Professional Practice**

**The ability to influence people (even enemies) and to persuade others to reveal accurate information, to assist you, convert to your cause, to join forces and to become assets in your undertakings is one of the most prized skills of spies, interrogators and hostage negotiators. These skills, when combined with exceptional problem solving, ferocity in combat, and unnatural levels of persistence also make for the best of the best special forces operators.**

**Strangely, these skills are also found, to be the foundational skills of great leaders in most fields of business and some of the most successful business leaders and innovators have and further cultivate these disciplines.**

**Here's the good news. Almost all of these skills are learnable. We can also improve our abilities by improving these skills sets and when we learn the systems and skill sets employed by hostage negotiators, interrogators, spies and special forces operators, we can achieve amazing leverage, reduce stress and achieve more with less effort and fewer resources than ever before.**

**But you don't have to believe me. Here are a few articles, based on new research into interrogation and deception detection and an analysis of how to take this knowledge and to apply it to building a client centric and successful practice.**

**Let's start with the idea that spies and interrogators are trained in a few techniques that can be ethically adapted to our own private sector business and personal endeavors.**

**For example, in a recent edition of Sabotage Times entitled: "An Ex-Spy Told Us The 16 Best Ways To Interrogate Someone" the authors examined the work of an ex-spy, John Augustine and in particular, a number of approaches that are proven (in research) to work better than enhanced interrogative measures. So, let's look at each one and then how it might be applied to our own situations.**

**PRO TIP: Note that there are many studies and articles (as well as a quick review of the methods below) that verify that rapport and empathy tend to work better in both the short and long term to get information from an enemy (even a hardened and well-trained enemy). So, imagine what those techniques can do for you with friendly clients.**

**The Sixteen "Approaches" to interrogation and how to use them to improve communication and to build your practice:**

**1. Direct Approach:** Believe it or not, according to Augustine, 90% of the time, if you ask a prisoner or a terrorist a question, they will answer. It may not be the truth but it is information that can be used later on for leverage.

**How we use this:** So, most of the time we develop products, services and marketing based on what we know and think is best for the client. We never actually ask the client what they want and need. But spies spend an enormous amount of time collecting and analyzing information. You should too. In my own practice, we discovered a very powerful selling proposition (probably responsible for over \$5,000,000.00 of sales in the last few years) because we kept asking clients what they worried about and what they found most helpful following the planning process.

**Bonus Note:** Like terrorists, clients will often lie and tell you what they think you want to hear. But deception detection (which we'll also examine) and a healthy skepticism and "follow up interrogation" will help you to really get to the bottom of things and to develop actionable HUMIT (human intelligence).

HUMIT can also be supplemented with ELINT (Electronic Intelligence in the parlance of the NSA) through the use of "heat map" software, Google analytics, pixel retargeting, surveys, etc.

**2. Establish Identity:** This is a very effective technique. You start your interrogation by telling a terrorist he is a spy captured without a uniform therefore losing the protection of the Geneva Convention. The prisoner responds by refuting the charges therefore establishing his identity by going on to explain that he is fighting as a soldier in the Holy War – telling you more than he had planned.

**How we use this:** In this case, the civilian version of this is to tell a client a story about someone who is like them, who failed to go through the process you are using, or who failed to use an appropriate technique, and as a result, terrible things happened. For example, people in second marriages often call thinking that the estate planning will be cheap and easy. They think that they just leave everything to their children (possible missing real tax planning opportunities or being unrealistic regarding a second spouses expectations) or that they will leave it "all to my wife" who will then pass on the wealth as agreed.

So, when we tell them a story of someone who did this and it ended badly we are implicitly asking "are you that sort of person?"

**Bonus Note:** Once confronted with a result that is morally unacceptable they will argue that no they are not that sort of person and they will tell you more about what really matters.

**3. "We Already Know It All":** This technique is used to convince the prisoner (or in our case, the client) that the interrogator knows everything: someone else has talked and the prisoner needs to answer questions in their own self-interest. This works because the prisoner feels they are not betraying anything, as the interrogator knows it all already. The problem with this technique is that you need vast knowledge of your enemy.

In my early days of learning these techniques, I used this in an interrogation of a son whose mother was also being interrogated in another room. They had attempted to kill a person who had survived and told us everything.

**How we use this:** In practice, after a while you start to know who does what. And, if you have done your research and had them fill out an estate or financial planning questionnaire then you probably do already know a lot. Are your intake people also taking good notes about what clients tell them? So, if we strongly suspect that there is tension between siblings who work in the family business and those who do not, we can say” Look we know that this is happening and it happens all the time. You’re not alone in this.” That can get people talking.

**Bonus Note:** Once you get them talking because you’ve demonstrated that you’re paying attention and that you have other clients like them and you’re adapt at solving these issues, they are more likely to accept your suggestion of a solution such as a family meeting.

**4. Good Cop, Bad Cop:** A sympathetic interrogator versus a loud, aggressive interrogator. This needs sophisticated role play to work but can be very effective if the sympathetic interrogator builds rapport with the prisoner.

**How we use this: OK.** This is an old one but a good one. In fact, while it doesn’t seem useful (who want to be a bad cop to the client?) it can still be very useful in situations where there is a recalcitrant relative who doesn’t want to participate in alternative resolution or a solution that would be good for everyone.

**Bonus Note:** For example, if there is a proposed heir who is refusing to participate or who is exhibiting bad behavior, they can be introduced to the “litigation model of dispute resolution and to a litigator.” This can then be compared with an ADR model of resolution and to a mediator who is happy and kind by comparison.

**5. Silent Treatment:** The interrogator says nothing in the interrogation room but just stares at the prisoner. This technique usually only works with unstable or untrained prisoners. This is also a technique used in therapy and in certain types and stages of negotiation. The human default to loath a conversational vacuum works to get information.

**How we use this:** Just being a little bit more interested and curious about the other person (your client) is often enough to help you get loads of important and actionable information. So, after asking better and more open-ended questions use this technique to hold back and wait to get more information.

**Bonus Note:** Questions might include: Well how else could you handle that? Followed by “And?” Also useful: “what else would they need to know?” What might happen if they don’t know or understand that?” Also followed by “and?” or “Anything else?”

**6. Love of Family:** An interrogator leverages the prisoner’s feelings toward his loved ones and what might happen to them if he doesn’t comply with the interrogator.

**How we use this:** This one gets used the same way in our practice as it might be used by a spy, interrogator and negotiator. We can describe a failure to do the right kind of planning and have them imagine and then tell us what the consequences might be.

**Bonus Note:** This can also be useful in determining whether or not they understand all of the real-world ramifications of an estate planning tool and/or the failure to address it.

**7. Love of “Country or Comrades”:** An interrogator convinces a prisoner to think of his comrades; he talks and therefore keeps them safe.

**How we use this:** Again, in the same way and most often when discussing friends or family members who might be acting as fiduciaries and/or business partners and associates.

**Bonus Note:** For example, we might ask them to consider what would happen if we do not protect business successors through the use of leases and employment contracts and/or buy and sell agreements.

**8. Hate of “Country or Comrades”:** An interrogator convinces the prisoner he has been abandoned and isolated. Revenge is the key to this technique.

**How we use this:** Anyone ever have a client that wants to do everything in the simplest way and ignores prudent tax planning? A quick reminder of how the government might tax them again at death on the assets that they have paid on for their whole lives might do the trick.

**Bonus Note:** This can also be used to motivate more attention to the important issue of protecting heirs from divorce and lawsuits. Anyone ever have a client that loved their “ex-son or daughter in law.”

**9. Incompetent Interrogator:** An interrogator convinces an arrogant prisoner with illusions of superiority that he, the interrogator, is incompetent. This is a very effective technique in the Middle East when female interrogators are sent to interview high-ranking officials.

**How we use this:** This one was always easy for me. But most of the time we want to be seen by our clients as effective and highly competent. However, we can discuss “other attorneys and clients” who handled things poorly and got bad results and can partner with the client to make sure that that doesn’t happen to him or her.

**Bonus Note:** Sometimes this can also be accomplished by saying “I’m not sure that I understood everything you were suggesting or saying since it seems to contradict x, y, or z – that you said were important to you.” “Can you review it for me again so I make sure I get it right?”

**10. Rapid Fire:** An interrogator fires continuous questions while constantly interrupting the prisoner as they try to answer. The prisoner through exasperation may answer truthfully when finally given an opportunity to speak.

OK. This one is hard to use in a client centric practice and should probably be avoided! Now at home and specifically with teenagers? That’s another story and this can be effective in the short term.

**11. Pride and Ego-positive:** An interrogator praises the prisoner as a warrior/soldier saying he fought well. The interrogator stresses comradeship, which can be a building block to getting the prisoner to talk soldier-to-soldier.

**How we use this:** Many times, clients have preconceived notions of what they want (perhaps loads of difficult and potentially confusing and contradictory specific bequests). But, they have arrived at these conclusions (and fixated on them) only because they didn’t understand all of their options. Praising the client for the thoughtfulness of their plans, goals and motivations

can then segue into other and perhaps better ways to protect heirs, reduce costs or other articulated outcomes.

**Bonus Note:** For example: “So I can tell you’ve thought a lot about this and developed so clear planning objectives. For example, you’ve said you really want to protect your daughter’s inheritance from a divorce. And you are not sure about your son-in law. But at the same time, you are requiring the trust for your daughter to end when she’s 35. Could we have it go on to continue that protection since many divorces occur after 35?”

**12. Pride and Ego-Negative:** A most misused tactic by young interrogators who forget that their job is to get information, not to judge the prisoner. Instead of building rapport, the interrogator focuses on being in charge and berates the prisoner and his culture.

**How we use this:** We don’t for the reasons cited in the article. But, it’s a common problem for advisers who act like they’re in charge. We find clients are way better to work with and have a much happier experience (followed by referral) when we acknowledge right from the start that they are in charge.

**Bonus Note:** Don’t assume that everyone in your organization gets this. How are calls handled? Have you ever listened in or recoded such calls for training purposes?

**13. Fear:** An interrogator pounds the table, threatens the prisoner with a focus on their fears which, in most cases, are always worse than the reality.

**How we use this:** So, this sounds like one you would not use. But we do. Sometimes, people cannot do what they really want and need to do without experiencing fear. And we have a full repertoire of stories that induce fear of failing to act in a timely manner and to implement the documents that they really need to achieve their goals.

**Bonus Note:** Pay attention to the stories that you tell that really work. Then use them again and again for the same purpose. For example, my brother has a high-end property and casualty insurance firm. He is constantly telling clients to buy high value personal lines umbrella policies. He observed that after his clients saw me, that they would always buy them. Why? I have a good story. Ask me to tell you sometime...especially if you don’t have an umbrella liability policy.

**14. Calm:** An interrogator shows compassion, empathy, or understanding and the prisoner reciprocates and gives information.

**How we use this:** We do use it. Sometimes, a client is reluctant to share a family secret or dynamic that might really matter to the planning process. If we show that we or other clients have been harmed by failing to fix problems proactively, and/or we show that we understand and have experience the client may be more willing to share and we get them a better result.

**Bonus Note:** In today's world, drug and alcohol dependency is common and drafting for it can be an important enhancement to a plan. Because this can be a delicate subject I usually bring it up as part of something I put in my own plan (based on experiences that my clients have had) and get the client to acknowledge that this can "happen to anyone in any family."

**15. Train is Leaving:** An interrogator convinces the prisoner that timing is a major factor. He needs to talk now or there is no deal for leniency.

**How we use this:** The application of this technique is obvious here. Many times, clients need to do things, update plans, hold family succession meetings etc. that are hard to do but way overdue. This technique can be very helpful in finally getting action and attention on what matters. We can convince them that failing to act now has consequences that are antithetical to their already established goals and values.

**Bonus Note:** This technique works well when combined with a phased approach to estate planning. For example, it might be really important to eliminate a/b trusts and to replace them with disclaimer trusts. It might also be important to do an IRA trust. We establish the importance of these documents but set a timeline with multiple appointments for each phase so that the urgent gets done no matter what.

**16. The Combination:** An interrogator synergistically uses more than one technique.

**How we use this:** There is never a client meeting when I don't use multiple techniques. There is a synergy to these and they often flow from one to the other.

**Bonus Note:** Here's a real pro tip. When you combine these techniques with a few of the verbal techniques used by interrogators you have a powerful method for getting more done for



the clients in a more effective and satisfying way. They also buy more, send friends and family and are more willing to come back and to update more often. For that reason, we have more for you one how spies and interrogators get information as it applies to building, managing, and marketing your business/professional practice.

**About the Author of “An Ex-Spy Told Us The 16 Best Ways To Interrogate Someone”**  
“Jon Augustine” is a former spy who served as an officer in the United States Army Intelligence Support Activity (USAISA). “The Activity” is a top-secret Special Operations Unit that collects actionable intelligence in advance of missions by other US Special Operations forces, especially counter-terrorist operations.

## RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

### Books:

**The Language of Parenting: Building Great Family Relationships At All Ages** (a study of how spies, interrogators and hostage negotiators use language in family relationships): David M. Frees III (2014 Redwire Press) available from Amazon

**The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change The Way You Lead Forever**: Michael Bungay Stanier (2016 Box Of Crayons Press)

**Extreme Ownership: How Navy Seals Lead and Win**: Jocko Willink and Leif Babin (2016 St Martin’s Press)

**Never Split the Difference**: Chris Voss

### Research and Articles:

An Ex-Spy Told Us The 16 Best Ways To Interrogate Someone

<http://sabotagetimes.com/life/a-former-spy-told-us-the-16-best-ways-to-interrogate-a-suspect>

The Humane Interrogation Technique That Actually Works

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/12/the-humane-interrogation-technique-that-works-much-better-than-torture/383698/>

The Dark Side Of Interrogation

<http://clbb.mgh.harvard.edu/the-dark-side-of-interrogation/>

FBI Gets An Unexpected Lesson From An Interrogator For The Nazis

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-fbi-nazi-interrogator-20160610-snap-story.html>

**Inducing disclosure through Priming: Exploring Subtle Persuasion Tactics in HUMINT Interviewing**

David Amon Neequaye, Karl Ask, Pär-Anders Granhag - The 12th meeting of The Nordic network for research on psychology and law. Uppsala, Sweden: September 23-24, 2016 Conference contribution

Hostage negotiation and Interrogation Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution Vol. 26:4 2011

The Science Of Negotiation: Rapport Not Torture Works. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/wray-herbert/the-science-of-interrogat\\_b\\_6309296.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/wray-herbert/the-science-of-interrogat_b_6309296.html)

Crisis (hostage) negotiation: current strategies and issues in high-risk conflict resolution. Gregory M. Vecchi, Vincent B VanHasslet, and Stephen J. Romano

**Discriminating between statements of true and false intent: The impact of repeated interviews and strategic questioning** Pär-Anders Granhag, Erik Mac Giolla, Tuule Sooniste, Leif Strömwall, Meiling Liu-Jönsson - Journal of Applied Security Research, Journal article 2016

**Task-related spontaneous thought: A novel direction in the study of true and false intentions** Erik Mac Giolla, Pär-Anders Granhag, Karl Ask - Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition, Journal article 2016

**Training police investigators to interview to detect false intentions** Tuule Sooniste, Pär-Anders Granhag, Leif Strömwall - Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, Journal article 2016

**Eliciting Information from People Who Pose a Threat: Counter-Interview Strategies Examined** Renate Geurts, Karl Ask, Pär-Anders Granhag, Aldert Vrij - Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition, Journal article 2016