

## Applying Cialdini's Principles Towards Building Advisor Influence

*[Building and wielding influence creates a unique kind of gravitational pull with clients and prospects. **Robert Cialdini**, through his decades of behavioral and social science research and foundational book **Influence**, outlined the universal principles of influence and the science of moving people in your direction. Each of these principles are governed by fundamental psychological forces he has observed that directs human nature.*

*Applying this vital skill and enhanced level of engagement to your financial services business has been a goal of many advisors, but requires a strategic commitment to realize, not just a tentative, tactical approach. It is becoming increasingly vital in our environment of accelerating change and information overload, to learn to apply these levers of influence, not to be exploitive, but to help people make decisions in our increasingly VUCA world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.*

*To learn more about applying these principles to a financial services practice, we reached out to Institute member **Matt Halloran** Co-founder of **Proudmouth** - a leading influence accelerator company and done-for-you podcasting service provider for advisors and industry experts.]*

**Hortz: What areas of Cialdini's work have been most helpful in how you built your services to help advisors increase their influence?**

**Halloran:** First and foremost, we are influence accelerators. That is the heart of what we do. So, who better to take inspiration from than the "Godfather of Influence" Dr. Robert Cialdini - the author of the foundational book on the topic, **Influence**. By the way, he recently published a new and expanded edition in 2021!

We built our services to include incorporating the seven areas of influence that Dr. Cialdini outlines in his book: reciprocity, commitment/consistency, social proof, authority, liking, scarcity, and unity.

**Hortz: How have you applied Cialdini's principles to your services to help advisors build their influence through podcasting?**

**Halloran:** Great question! Let me quickly address how we apply some of the principles.

**Authority:** This is one of my favorites! We had an advisor client who said, "Matt, I don't care if anyone listens to my show. The minute I say I have a podcast, a prospect immediately looks at me as an authority figure!" Doing something that others are not doing allows you to look more like a subject matter expert. Who else has a podcast? Not many.

**Liking:** Part of our podcast growth strategy is to have the advisor show who they are, what they are like, what they like to do, and, most importantly, their personality! When someone finds out that you have the same interests that you have, everything changes. When a listener sees themselves in you, the topic, a story or a guest, your connection with them grows exponentially.

**Reciprocity:** The most important thing we do is help our advisor clients freely share their personality, ideas, and advice with their audience. And, once an advisor has provided value for say 27 minutes (the length of a typical podcast), it is totally OK to ask the listener to do something in the form of a call-to-action. This sparks the process of reciprocity. The more you give, the more you can ask for!

*Scarcity:* We make sure our advisors are not publishing too much, too often. We want their audience to crave the podcast and content we create for our clients. Our two-podcast-per-month run rate is by design. It creates scarcity! We also use the principle of scarcity with the kinds of guests our clients have on their shows. You have to go through a very structured process to become a guest. This makes not just the audience feel the principle of scarcity, but also the guest.

*Unity:* The newest universal principle Cialdini added with his latest edition describes how individuals can be convinced that a communicator shares a meaningful personal or social identity. This is where people connect and say yes to someone they consider “one of them” through a shared experience, history, geography, or way of thinking. When you have a shared experience with someone and openly share it, that person feels connected with you. This is why we want our advisor’s voice and personality to come through in every recording.

**Hortz: *What about the other principles? Do you apply these differently?***

**Halloran:** Yes, there are two more principles.

*Social Proof:* We use social proof in a different way than one might expect. We use it in two ways:

1. We have the social proof of commitment to content and that you are a thought leader in your area of expertise. The more you deposit your thought leadership, the more social proof you have. We view this as a numbers game. When you have one hundred more podcasts than another advisor, we believe you are noticeably more credible because you have shown consistent commitment to educating your target market.
2. We also use social proof by getting industry experts to be guests on our clients’ podcasts. The guests’ presence demonstrates that the advisor can attract and bring in the best of the best to educate their audience. Basically, those guests are endorsing you and your practice by being in the show.

*Commitment/Consistency:* We ask our clients to initially stay with us for a year. This is to show your clients and your audience that you have made a commitment to them! We also have them set a consistent marketing/podcasting/social media strategy to prove that they are not only committed to sharing great content but also consistent with it. Advisors want to be in the lives of their clients; this becomes possible when advisors create content that clients can enjoy 24/7 at their convenience.

**Hortz: *Why do you see podcasting as the perfect delivery system to build influence?***

**Halloran:** Producing easily accessible and consumable thought leadership is the key to building influence, but so few advisors know how to do this; and few put in the effort that is needed. What we have found is that podcasting is the easiest and best way for influencers to produce valuable, intimate, honest, and personal content that their audience enjoys consuming.

Think about this. Consider how convenient podcasts are and, most importantly, consider how a podcast comes across to listeners. You can listen while you walk, commute, or cook dinner. This is also why we recommend that your podcast is 27 minutes long as that is the average length of time of each of those activities. Since listeners have control and have opted when and how they consume the information, they tend to be more relaxed and open to information being shared. Listeners are more open to hear how much the podcaster cares, what they know, and how they communicate.

**Hortz: *Any other thoughts to share on why podcasting should be considered by advisors wanting to build engagement and influence to grow their business?***

**Halloran:** Starting a podcast is such a powerful competitive tool and community engagement strategy that attracts your ideal prospects. Podcasts turn skeptical prospects into fans who start doing the selling for you; this usually happens when they tell other people about your podcast. That is how influence works. It’s magic 24 hours a day, if you put the effort into it.

Look, I have never met an advisor who did not like to talk. So, this can be a natural progression. In fact, we have an Academy with courses, led by vetted experts and podcast producers, who make it easy to start your own podcast and to walk you through the steps and progression of developing your podcast. We invite you to grow your influence by signing up for a [free beginner membership](#) at our PodRocket Academy.

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