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FREE TEMPLATE

7 PRINCIPLES SWIPE FILE

The 7 Principles Swipe File: Cialdini's Influence, Ready to Paste

All 7 principles from Robert Cialdini's Influence as a homepage line, an email line and a sales-call line, plus an honesty rule for each, a 10-point site check and a worked rewrite.

14	65	2026-11
SECTIONS	IDEAS, TOOLS & TEMPLATES	LAST CHECKED



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Tested, not guessed.

INSIDE THIS TEMPLATE

All 7 principles from Influence (new and expanded edition), each turned into lines you can paste into your homepage, emails and sales calls. Plus a 10-point check that shows which principles your site is missing, a worked email rewrite, and a table of where each principle works best.

> WHO IT'S FOR
>
> Founders, freelancers and small agencies whose site and emails explain the product but don't get people to say yes.

01 **If you only have 15 minutes**
Robert Cialdini spent years studying, and working undercover in, sales jobs to learn why people say yes. He...

02 **The 7 principles in one table**
One line each, so you know what you're working with.

03 **Which principle to use where**
Not every principle fits every place. Start with the ones marked strong for the page you're fixing.

04 **1. Reciprocity**
People want to give back when you give first.

05 **2. Commitment & consistency**
Once people say a small yes, they like to stay consistent with it.

06 **3. Social proof**
People copy what people like them are doing.

07 **4. Authority**
People follow credible experts.

08 **5. Liking**
People say yes to people they like and feel similar to.

09 **6. Scarcity**
People want things more when they are rare or about to go away.

10 **7. Unity**
People say yes to people who share their identity: 'one of us'.

11 **Worked example: one cold email, before and after**
Illustrative. A made-up freelance SEO writing to a bakery owner.

12 **Which principles is my site missing? (10 checks)**

13 Common mistakes when using persuasion

14 Copy-paste prompt: audit your page with the 7 principles

HOW TO USE IT

1

Only 15 minutes? Do the quick start: run the 10-point check and add just one missing principle today.

2

For the full version, pick the missing principles and copy their lines. Fill in every [bracket] with real facts.

3

Read the honesty line before you publish. If you can't fill a bracket honestly, skip that line.

01

If you only have 15 minutes

Robert Cialdini spent years studying, and working undercover in, sales jobs to learn why people say yes. He found that people lean on mental shortcuts when deciding fast. The story in the reel, a jewellery shop that sold out after prices were doubled by mistake, is his example of one: when buyers can't judge quality, a higher price reads as better. Use these shortcuts honestly and buyers decide faster.

1 **Minute 0–5: Run the 10-point check at the bottom**

Tick what your homepage already does. Most small sites miss social proof near the button and a free useful thing.

2 **Minute 5–10: Add one review next to your main button**

A real review from a customer like your target buyer, with name and business (with permission). This is social proof at the moment of decision.

3 **Minute 10–15: Add one free useful thing**

A checklist, a free audit, a calculator. Give it with no catch. That's reciprocity.

02

The 7 principles in one table

One line each, so you know what you're working with.

Principle	What it means
Reciprocity	People want to give back when you give first.
Commitment & consistency	Once people say a small yes, they like to stay consistent with it.
Social proof	People copy what people like them are doing.
Authority	People follow credible experts.
Liking	People say yes to people they like and feel similar to.

Principle	What it means
Scarcity	People want things more when they are rare or about to go away.
Unity	People say yes to people who share their identity: 'one of us'.

03

Which principle to use where

Not every principle fits every place. Start with the ones marked strong for the page you're fixing.

Principle	Homepage	Email	Sales call	Watch out
Reciprocity	Strong: free tool or guide	Strong: send something useful first	Medium: one free fix	A gift with a hook is a bribe
Commitment & consistency	Medium: small first step (quiz, free check)	Medium: yes/no reply asks	Strong: repeat their stated goal	Never twist their words
Social proof	Strong: reviews near button	Medium: one similar-customer story	Strong: what peers usually choose	Only real, permitted reviews
Authority	Strong: real credentials	Medium: one line of relevant work	Strong: specific experience	No inflated titles
Liking	Medium: real face and name	Strong: a genuine personal note	Strong: real interest in them	Fake flattery backfires
Scarcity	Weak unless truly limited	Medium: real capacity	Medium: real start dates	Fake limits are dark patterns
Unity	Medium: 'built by X for X'	Strong: shared group	Medium: shared background	Only groups you belong to

04

1. Reciprocity

People want to give back when you give first.

Homepage line

Free: [the useful thing] for [who]. No signup needed.

Email line

I made you a [checklist/teardown] for [their site]. It's attached, no strings.

Sales-call line

Before we talk price, here's one thing you can fix on [their site] this week: [specific fix].

Use it honestly

Give something truly useful with no catch. If the gift is a trick to trap them, it's a bribe, not a gift.

05

2. Commitment & consistency

Once people say a small yes, they like to stay consistent with it.

Homepage line

Start with one question: [simple yes/no question about their goal].

Email line

Quick one: is [goal] still a priority for you this quarter? A yes or no is enough.

Sales-call line

Earlier you said [their exact words]. Does this plan match that?

Use it honestly

Only ask for small yeses they actually mean. Never twist their words back on them.

06

3. Social proof

People copy what people like them are doing.

Homepage line

[Number] [type of customer] use [product] to [result].

Email line

[Customer name], a [similar business], used this to [real result].

Sales-call line

Most [their type of business] we talk to start with [option]. Want to see why?

Use it honestly

Use only real numbers and real customers, with permission. Fake reviews or counts can break the law and kill trust.

07

4. Authority

People follow credible experts.

Homepage line

[Years] years doing [skill]. Featured in [real publication].

Email line

I've done [specific relevant work] since [year]. Here's what I'd check first.

Sales-call line

In my experience with [type of project], the first thing that breaks is [problem].

Use it honestly

State only real credentials. Admit what you don't know. Send them to better help if you're not the right fit.

08

5. Liking

People say yes to people they like and feel similar to.

Homepage line

Hi, I'm [name]. I [relatable fact] too, so I built [product] for people like you.

Email line

Saw your post about [specific thing]. I [honest shared experience].

Sales-call line

Before we start: how did [thing they mentioned] go?

Use it honestly

Be genuinely interested and honest. Fake flattery and made-up common ground are manipulation.

09

6. Scarcity

People want things more when they are rare or about to go away.

Homepage line

Only [number] spots per month. [Number] left for [month].

Email line

I'm taking [number] new clients in [month]. Want one of the spots?

Sales-call line

I can start on [date]. After that, the next opening is [date].

Use it honestly

Only use real limits and real deadlines. Fake timers and fake 'only 2 left' are lies.

10

7. Unity

People say yes to people who share their identity: 'one of us'.

Homepage line

Built by a [shared identity], for [shared identity].

Email line

As a fellow [shared identity], I thought you'd want this first.

Sales-call line

We're both [shared identity], so I'll tell you what I'd do in your place: [advice].

Use it honestly

Only claim a group you truly belong to. Never use 'we' to pressure someone.

11

Worked example: one cold email, before and after

Illustrative. A made-up freelance SEO writing to a bakery owner.

Before (no principles)

Subject: SEO services

Hi, I am an SEO expert with many years of experience. I offer on-page SEO, off-page SEO, link building and content. Please let me know if you are interested. Regards.

> All about the sender. Nothing given, no proof, no small ask.

After (reciprocity + social proof + authority + small commitment)

Subject: 3 fixes for [Bakery] on Google Maps

Hi [Name],

I looked up 'cake shop [area]' and noticed [Bakery] doesn't show in the top 3. I made you a 1-page list of 3 fixes (attached, free, no strings). [Reciprocity]

I've done local SEO since [real year]. Last year I helped [real bakery, with permission] get into the top 3 for their area. [Authority + social proof]

Want me to walk you through the list in 10 minutes this week? A yes or no reply is fine. [Small commitment]

[Your name]

> Every bracket must be real. If you don't have a past bakery client, drop that line. The gift alone still works.

12

Which principles is my site missing? (10 checks)

- [ ] **There's a free, useful thing on the site that needs no payment.**
  Reciprocity.
- [ ] **The first ask is small (a quiz, a free audit, a short form), not 'book a 1-hour call'.**
  Commitment & consistency.
- [ ] **Real customer reviews or logos sit near the main button.**
  Social proof at the moment of decision.
- [ ] **At least one review is from a customer just like your target buyer.**
  Social proof works best from similar people.
- [ ] **Your real credentials, years or results are on the homepage.**
  Authority.
- [ ] **There's a real face and a real name, not just 'we'.**
  Liking: people buy from people.
- [ ] **Your About section shares something human your buyers relate to.**
  Liking through similarity.
- [ ] **If capacity or time is truly limited, the page says so.**
  Scarcity, only when true.
- [ ] **The copy names the group you serve and that you belong to it (if you do).**
  Unity.
- [ ] **Nothing on the site is fake: no fake timers, counts, reviews or badges.**
  One fake claim undoes every honest principle.

13

Common mistakes when using persuasion

- [ ] **You stacked all 7 principles into one page.**
  It reads as pushy. Two or three, done well, beat seven done badly.
- [ ] **Your reviews are vague or made up.**
  Fake reviews and testimonials are banned under the FTC's 2024 rule in the US, and misleading ads break the ASCI Code in India.

- [ ] **Your 'only 2 left' or countdown timer is fake.**
  India's 2023 dark-pattern guidelines name false urgency as a dark pattern.
- [ ] **Your free gift needs a credit card.**
  Then it isn't a gift, and people feel tricked.
- [ ] **You claimed authority you don't have.**
  One checked lie undoes every other honest line.
- [ ] **Your social proof is from the wrong people.**
  A big-company logo won't move a small shop owner. Show people like the buyer.
- [ ] **You used 'we' and 'family' to pressure.**
  Unity only works when the shared identity is real.

14

Copy-paste prompt: audit your page with the 7 principles

Paste into ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini

```
Use Robert Cialdini's 7 principles of influence (reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, scarcity, unity).

Here is my homepage copy: [paste]
My real proof: [reviews, numbers, credentials, limits]

1. For each principle, say if the page uses it (yes/partly/no) and quote the line.
2. Suggest one line per missing principle, using only my real proof.
3. Flag anything that could be read as fake urgency, fake reviews or pressure.
Do not invent facts.
```

> Paste the real proof list carefully. The AI will fill gaps with made-up claims if you let it.

Sources

Every claim in this Template traces back to one of these. Checked 2026-11.

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