

# STANDING IN THEIR SHOES

Making sure you understand a potential client's world view is often the best way to effectively influence them, argues **Roger Ellerton**



**People may not remember exactly what you did, or what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel - Maya Angelou**

**As a mortgage broker, you are constantly influencing** others to accept you, your ideas, products or services.

Many people have difficulty influencing others because they tend to use the same strategies and emphasise the same needs and values with other people that they would like other people to use with them. Alternatively, they take the 'spray and pray' approach, hoping their clients will find something useful in the information provided.

Each of us has different needs and different strategies for buying. To be truly effective at influencing others, you need to view the situation from their perspective; that is, to determine what is important to them and how they like to purchase.

Take me, as an example: I am not a mortgage broker. From my perspective, all mortgage brokers are the same – you have access to mortgages with various rates and features. It is up to you to be the difference that makes the difference. I want you to help me feel good about the process, and to allow me to buy the mortgage that I need rather than sell me the mortgage.

### **DETERMINE YOUR CLIENT'S NEEDS AND VALUES**

Far too often we think it's the product or service that people want to buy. In reality, people buy the benefit that the product or service provides. If you are not certain what is important to your client, you will not be able to present your products or services clearly. Having an understanding of your client's needs and values can:

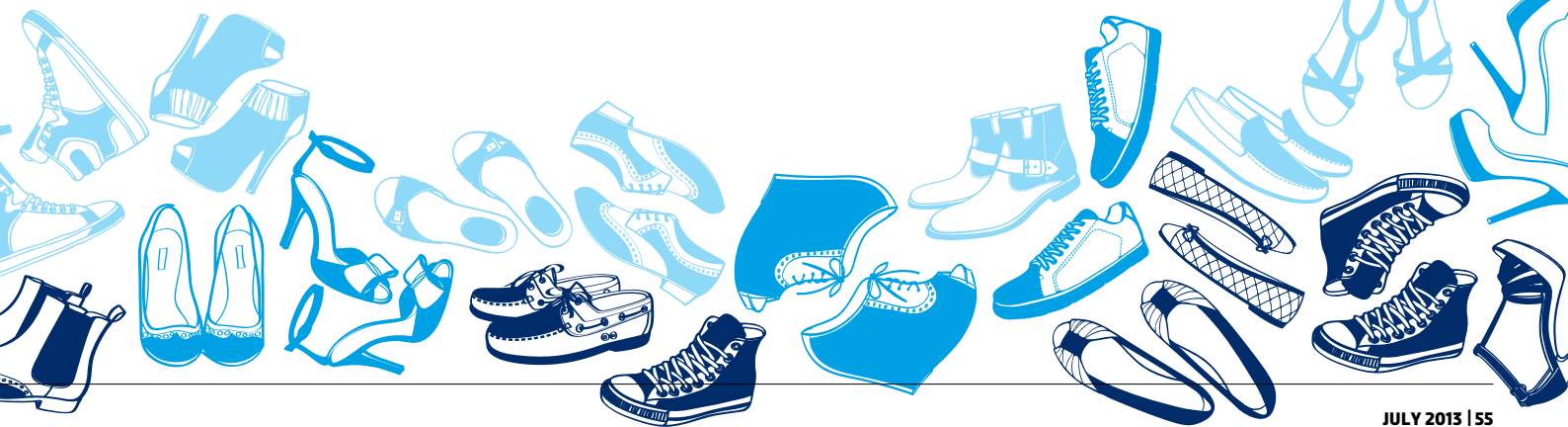
- shorten the whole influence process
- provide a better understanding of how to present your offering
- lead to a better agreement for both parties
- give you an opportunity to suggest something the other person forgot, did not think was possible, or that was out of their awareness
- create a firmer foundation on which to conclude this and future interactions positively

How do you become the difference that makes the difference? Begin by asking questions. Listen for what is important to your client and how they express what is important to them.

Some clients will come to you with their minds already made up as to what is the best mortgage for them, having usually obtained 'expert' advice from their friends or an internet search. They may be incorrect, but rather than telling them why their choice is not a good idea given the current financial climate, or simply offering the best available product, acknowledge their choice and explore the reason behind it. Once you have clearly identified the underlying need or value, you can raise the possibility that this need could be addressed in ways that provide additional benefits.

With some people, you may have to ask lots of

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## FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS

questions. With others, you may have to interrupt politely to ask questions to get them back on track.

A client's needs and values can be intangible, such as respect, or tangible, such as a monthly payment that is within their budget. Having an understanding of your client's specific needs and values provides clarity on what is truly important to them and will help you recognise where you can compromise, suggest trade-offs or hold firm.

I have found that specifying your client's most important needs and values in terms of the acronym 'RIGHTS' (see box opposite) can stimulate your thought processes, encourage you to take a more concerted look at their needs and values, and help you remember what is important to your client.

### SPEAK TO ME IN A WAY THAT MAKES ME FEEL UNDERSTOOD

Equally important is how your client expresses their RIGHTS. Each one of us experiences the world around us in our own unique way; that is, we tend to focus on certain types of information to the exclusion of others. For example, some people focus on what they want to achieve; others are more interested in avoiding potential problems.

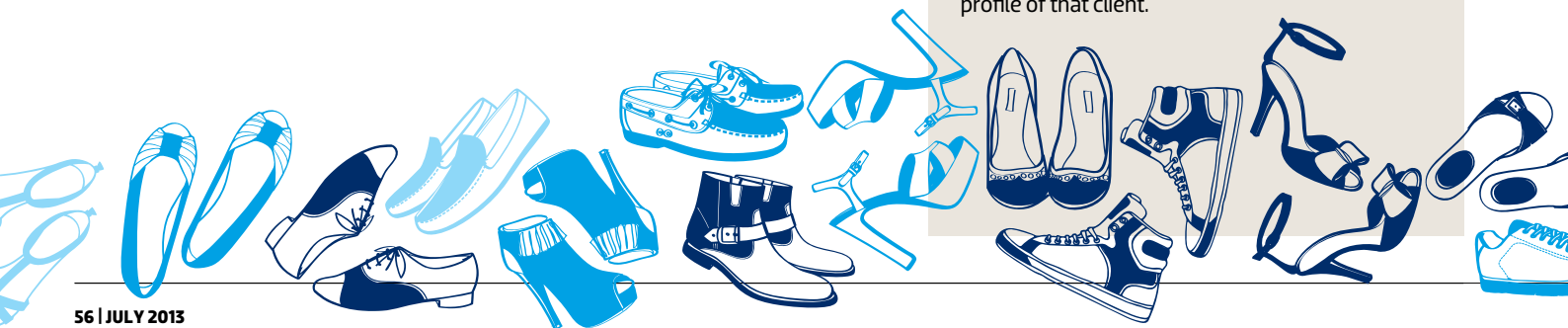
With the former, you would emphasise how your proposed solution would help them to achieve what they want. With the latter, you would point out how your proposed solution would allow them to avoid potential problems.

The words and phrases we use give away our world view. By listening carefully to a client's communication style, we can work out what's important to them and adjust our responses appropriately. And these are exactly the words you can use to motivate them. Listen for the key words and phrases that betray your client's views, and use the same words and concepts to explain your offering.

Use this profile to refresh your memory about each client, and modify it as you repeatedly meet and focus on their specific needs. By refining this profile, you will improve the way you interact with your clients, increase your closing success rate, and receive more referrals.

- R**
  - Reputation
  - Risk (minimisation)
  - Reduce (costs)
  - Respect (their viewpoint)
  - Responsive (to their needs)
- I**
  - Information (on mortgage or how to better handle their needs)
- G**
  - Guarantees (mortgage for a specific period of time)
  - Green (environmental priorities, such as electronic rather than paper documents)
- H**
  - Health (reduced stress)
  - Helpful (quality service)
  - Heard and feels understood
- T**
  - Time (meetings are convenient)
  - Time (to settling mortgage)
  - Timely (response to requests)
- S**
  - Safety (affordable payments)
  - Savings (money)
  - Satisfaction (with process and results)

Assessing your clients' needs using the acronym RIGHTS can help you understand their point of view. For each client, identify at least one key need or value for each letter that is most important to your client. By doing this, you can build up a quick profile of that client.



The added advantage is that these words also have a clear meaning to your clients, reducing the risk of misunderstanding. Therefore, if they talk about ‘avoiding a potential problem’, then say that when presenting your offering, instead of referring to ‘mitigating undesired consequences’.

### 1. TOWARDS VS AWAY FROM

**Towards people** are focused on their goals. They are motivated to have, achieve and attain. They are clear about what they want.

**Key phrases: accomplish, attain, get, achieving, goals, results and outcomes.**

**Away-from people** often see only what may go wrong in a given situation; they notice what should be eliminated, avoided or repaired. They are motivated when there is a problem to be solved or something needs fixing.

**Key phrases: avoid, steer clear of, prevent, eliminate, solve, get rid of, fix, prohibit.**

### 2. INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL

**Internal people** have internal standards and use them to make their own judgments about you or your offering. They have difficulty accepting other people’s opinions. If they receive negative feedback regarding something they believe to be correct, they will question the judgment of the person giving the feedback. They assess the validity of information from outside sources according to their own internal standards.

You can motivate this type of person with the following phrases:

**Key phrases: I just know, it feels right, I’ll be the judge of that, I know what’s best.**

**External people** need outside direction and feedback to decide on the mortgage that is best for them. Without external validation, they may feel

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confused. They will turn to you as an expert for your opinion.


**Key phrases: according to the experts, your friends will think highly of your choice, is this the product most people are choosing?**

### 3. OPTIONS VS PROCEDURES

**Options people** are motivated by the possibility of doing something in an alternative way. They enjoy bending the rules or exploring new ideas and possibilities. An options client may continue to explore other alternatives, even when the best one for their situation has been identified.

**Key phrases: alternatives, bend the rules, flexible, unlimited possibilities, expand your choices, options.**

**Procedures people** like to follow established rules and processes. They are more concerned about how to do something than about why they should do it. Bending the rules is sacrilege. A procedures person will be interested in the process, rather than the outcome. To motivate a procedures person, for example, state that there are five critical steps to acquire a mortgage. Tell them what these five steps are. Then lead your client through these steps in the order you specified.

**Key phrases: correct way, tried and true, first, then, lastly, proven path.** 

**Roger Ellerton** is a public speaker, coach and author. This article is based on his book, "Win-Win Influence: How to Enhance Your Personal and Business Relationships". For more information, see [www.renewal.ca](http://www.renewal.ca).

