

Gheorghe-Ilie FÂRTE  
“Al. I. Cuza” University of Iași (Romania)

## **How to Cope with Resistance to Persuasion?**

**Abstract:** The main goal of this study is to develop a conceptual framework meant (a) to present the essential traits of persuasion, (b) to explain resistance to persuasion (mainly when the persuader tries to shape, reinforce, or change an attitudinal response), and (c) to provide a feasible strategy to overcome the coping behaviors associated with resistance to persuasion. Defined as the communication process in which “someone makes other people believe or decide to do something, especially by giving them reasons why they should do it, or asking them many times to do it”, persuasion ensures a noncoercive social control by shaping, reinforcing, or changing target audience’s cognitions, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Persuasion involves volitional behaviors (that are inextricably intertwined with spontaneous, impulsive, mindless, or compulsive behaviors) and a significant cognitive load. Even if persuasion does not elicit negative feelings like various shortcuts to compliance (coercion, bribery, deception, manipulation of the dominant instincts, etc.), it generates *ipso facto* resistance to persuasion. Public relations specialists and other communication professionals can reduce or cope with resistance to persuasion by creating a low-pressure persuasion context, using evidential reasons, and following evidential rules.

**Keywords:** persuasion, shortcut to compliance, resistance to persuasion, coping behavior, reactance, need for cognition, evidential reason, evidence-responsive belief