



DOMINIK MESSIAEN

SPREKER/KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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Smart influence techniques that improve your negotiations

Use one technique each week. Practice until it becomes automatic. Before you know it, you'll stand out in every conversation.

Mental Rehearsal: imagination works

Your brain cannot distinguish between a vividly imagined situation and reality. Top athletes use this. Now you can too by just visualising an interaction. The more vivid the image, the more real it feels to your subconscious mind.

👉 Quick Win: rehearse the stakeholder meeting before it happens

Picture your conversation vividly focusing on the interaction. Feel your calm tone. Hear the questions and objections. Use the formula: 'If they say x, I responds with y, so we move toward z.' => if they say, 'No budget,' respond: *'I understand budget is tight. And at the same time, the current workaround also has a cost. Would it help if we first compare the cost of action with the cost of delay?'*

👉 Quick Win: rehearse the translation from technical value to business value

Move from 'This new data platform offers a cleaner architecture and one source of truth' to (for Finance) *'It leads to less duplicated reporting and fewer hidden costs'* or (for HR) *'It leads to more reliable payroll and fewer employee frustrations'*.

Agreement Frame: 'Yes, and at the same time...'

Most people instinctively use the word 'but'. Unfortunately that word cancels everything that came before it. If you say 'I understand your reasoning, but ...', the brain hears 'I don't understand your reasoning.' Replace 'but' with 'and at the same time'. Both ideas stay intact and there's no loss of face. You challenge while preserving the relationship.

👉 Quick Win when stakeholders resist technical complexity

❌ 'I understand it may seem complex but it's not. Let me explain the architecture.'

✅ 'I understand that this sounds complex from the outside. *And at the same time, the current setup is already complex; it is just hidden in manual work, exceptions and local fixes. So what I suggest is that we first make the hidden complexity visible, and then decide which complexity we want to manage.*'

=> this changes the question from 'Is this IT project complex?' to 'Which complexity do we prefer: visible and managed or hidden and growing?'



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👉 Quick Win when you face the 'not invented here' syndrome

❌ 'I understand that your department is different, but it worked at baby care.'

✅ 'I understand that your context is different. And that is exactly why I would suggest not simply copying what worked elsewhere. *At the same time, we can learn from the pattern: where did it create value, where did it fail, and what should we adapt before applying it here?*'

Loss frame: people act to avoid loss

People are more motivated to avoid losses than to achieve gains. Losses typically feel about twice as strong as equivalent gains.

For maximum impact:

- combine with the agreement frame
- make the loss concrete with hard numbers
- use it ethically: base it on realistic scenarios

👉 Quick Win for 'We want it, but not now'

Loss frame: 'If we postpone this for six months, we continue paying for manual work, duplicate reporting, and local workarounds. *The question is not only what the project costs, but what delay is already costing us.*'

👉 Quick Win for 'We already have a local solution'

Loss frame: 'I understand that the local solution works today. *The risk is that every local fix becomes more expensive once we need to scale, secure, integrate or maintain it.* What works locally can become costly globally.'

👉 Quick Win for 'It's too expensive'

Loss frame: 'The project cost is visible because it appears as a budget line. *The current cost is less visible because it is spread across hours, errors, delays and rework.* Before we decide this is too expensive, let's compare it with what the current situation is already costing us.'



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Anchoring: set the reference point

Your brain automatically looks for a reference point and compares everything that follows to it.

The first number in the room becomes the mental anchor. Everything that follows will be judged against it. So ***don't start with the project cost. Start with the cost of the problem.***

👉 Quick Win: put the project cost into the right perspective

"Before we look at the project investment, let's first look at what the current process is costing us.

Today, 12 people spend about 3 hours per week correcting reports manually. That is 36 hours per week. Over 48 working weeks, that becomes 1,728 hours per year.

If we value internal time at €75 per hour, the current workaround costs roughly €129,600 per year.

So the question is not only: 'What does the project cost?'

The question is also: 'Why are we comfortable paying almost €130,000 every year to keep the current problem alive?'

👉 Quick Win: anchor delay as a monthly invoice

"I understand that now may not feel like the right moment. And at the same time, it's important you realize that postponing does not freeze the cost. The current workaround costs around €129,600 per year. That means every month of delay costs roughly €10,800. The real decision is: 'Do we invest in fixing it, or do we spend €65,000 keeping it alive for another six months?'

👉 Quick Win: anchor scale before discussing a pilot

"If we only look at one plant, the saving may look small: 8 hours per week. And at the same time, across 18 plants, that same saving becomes 144 hours per week. Over 48 working weeks, that is 6,912 hours per year. At €75 per hour, that represents more than half a million per year in potential value. So that's why we should judge the pilot by its ability to unlock scale."



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Priming: the first impression sets the stage

What you say or show first shapes how the stakeholders experience everything that follows. Priming helps stakeholders notice the right things: the cost of delay, the risk of local fixes, or the risk of non-compliance. Do not start by explaining the solution. Start by preparing the brain to see the problem.

👉 Quick Win: use a pre-read document as decision-primer

Instead of sending technical documentation, send "Before our meeting, I suggest you look at these 3 numbers:

1. The current workaround costs around €129,600 per year.
2. Every month of delay adds roughly €10,800.
3. Across 18 plants, even 8 hours saved per plant per week creates more than €518,000 in annual value.

In the meeting, I would like us to decide whether we treat this as a local improvement or as a scalable business opportunity.'

👉 Quick Win: frame the meeting with the meeting title and agenda

Title: 'Decision meeting: stop the €10,800 monthly delay cost' instead of 'IT project update'

Weak agenda

1. Project status
2. Technical update
3. Discussion
4. Next steps

This primes vague conversation.

Stronger agenda

1. Current leak: €129,600 per year
2. Cost of delay: €10,800 per month
3. Scale opportunity: €518,400 per year
4. Decision: pilot or broader rollout

This primes decision quality.



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👉 Quick Win: let an internal sponsor introduce the project

Ask the sponsor to open with a short business frame:

“The reason we are discussing this today is simple. The current setup creates manual work, delay and risk. We are not here to discuss an IT preference. We are here to decide how we reduce a business leak.”

Now IT enters the conversation with credibility already primed.

Double Bind: you choose, I guide

Give two options where both lead to your goal. It feels like freedom, and at the same time it guides action. Do not ask whether they want to move. Offer 2 useful options to move.

👉 Quick Win: move from analysis to action (to avoid 'not now')

❌ ‘We recommend starting implementation.’

✅ ‘Would you prefer to validate this with a 6-week pilot in one business unit, or capture value earlier by a broader rollout from the start?’

👉 Quick Win: to avoid approval creep when there are too many stakeholders

❌ ‘What does everything think?’

✅ ‘Do we want Contributors to give input by Friday, so the Approver can decide next week? Or do we want the Process Owner to first reduce the options to two before we involve the wider group?’

👉 Quick Win: close next steps

❌ ‘Let’s move forward with this.’

✅ ‘Would you prefer to secure momentum by starting next month, or take a few weeks to align internally and start the month after?’



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Full Sequence

Prime before the meeting

Use a pre-read document to pinpoint the loss if action is delayed

+ create the right mindset with the meeting title and agenda

+ let an internal sponsor introduce the topic

Anchor the current cost

“The current workaround costs around €129,600 per year.”

Use the loss frame

“Every month of delay costs around €10,800.”

Then use the double bind

“So would it be more useful to start with one pilot now, or first calculate what a three-month delay would cost before we decide?”

This is much stronger than asking:

“Can we move forward?”

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Follow me on [LinkedIn](#)! Be the first to know when my book is published. It's planned for spring 2027.



SCAN ME