

Persuasive Presentations

PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS are informative messages that intend to influence opinions, ideas, and actions. A lawyer lays out arguments and facts to a judge or jury pleading his or her client's innocence. A political candidate addresses concerns of constituents and tries to persuade them to vote for him or her. An environmentalist stirs up concern and seeks support about issues of global warming or the endangerment of wildlife. To be truly persuasive, the communicator must have a thorough knowledge of the subject.



Objectives:



1. Define persuasive messages using communication vocabulary.
2. Use an outline to organize related pieces of information.
3. Prepare a persuasive message using presentation graphics software.

Key Terms:



alphanumeric
emotional appeal
ethical appeal
information

logical appeal
outline
persuasion
persuasive messages

presentation graphics
rhetoric

Understanding Persuasive Messages and How to Create Them

Being able to sway someone's vote or influence someone's thinking requires various skills that require lots of practice and awareness.

PERSUASION

Persuasion is the ability to convey logic, emotion, ethical appeals, or inspiration to convince the target audience—a single person or a group—to act, believe, or think something. You must base your persuasive message on facts and must be specific about your message, if you want to persuade your audience to share your viewpoint. To successfully persuade, the context of your message must be directed toward issues that affect the lives of your audience members. You want to convince them that inaction is harmful and that action promises a brighter alternative. A persuasive message is based on facts that have conclusions.

Persuasive messages are convincing communications (e.g., speeches, advertisements, commercials, infomercials, graphics, and video images) that urge people to take action, such as preserving the environment, supporting a cause, or buying products or services.



FIGURE 1. A persuasive speaker talks to a skeptical one-person audience.

RHETORIC

Rhetoric is the art and study of using language effectively and persuasively. In ancient Greece, Aristotle considered rhetoric the counterpart of logic and politics. In the 1800s, western education used rhetoric to train public speakers and writers to use arguments to stimulate audience reactions. Today rhetoric is defined as effective and persuasive verbal communication. Conversely, in some usages, rhetoric is considered pretentious or insincere language.

INFORMATION

Information is organized data in the form of facts or statistics. Information is acquired through study or experience. Facts and information are the foundation needed to build a persuasive message.

PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

A wide variety of techniques is available to appeal to audiences. The type of appeal used may impact the audience positively or negatively. Therefore, the speaker should know the audience,

the culture, the environment, and other factors before determining which appeal is best for his or her subject matter.

Logical Appeal

Logical appeal is the ability to convince based on evidence and reasoning. It appeals to the audience's sense of reason. Advertising uses logical appeals to convince consumers of their needs for products and/or services. A nuclear activist uses logical appeal to convince audiences that nuclear weapons will harm people, the environment, and animals.

Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal is the ability to persuade by appealing to feelings (e.g., pity, remorse, anger, or excitement). It relies on humans being greatly affected by emotion. As a result, they ignore reason and respond to the appeal. An animal welfare agency uses emotional appeal to encourage pet adoption by showing you lovable animals.

Ethical Appeal

Ethical appeal is the ability to address audiences by appealing to their sense of moral correctness. People tend to trust an expert who has a reputation for integrity and honesty. Ethical appeals may involve messages about the death penalty, abortion, or safety belts.

Inspirational

Inspirational speeches address the sensibilities of an audience, but they do not necessarily provoke the audience to action. Instead, an inspirational message may try to coax an audience to accept specific points of view or values.

Outline Organization

We live in an information age where a nearly limitless supply of information is at our fingertips. But information must be organized to present an effective persuasive message that will be meaningful to an audience. An outline is an ideal way to structure your persuasive message. As the outline progresses, a stronger argument is built, which concludes by calling the audience to action.



FIGURE 2. This persuasive speaker uses emphatic body language to help convey the message.

PARTS OF AN OUTLINE

An **outline** is a tool used to organize a message in a logical order. Its three parts are the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Introduction

- ◆ The introduction should spark the audience's attention with a startling statement, a quotation, a rhetorical question, or a humorous story.
- ◆ The introduction should explain the topic and purpose, focusing on the target audience.
- ◆ The introduction should relate to how the audience will benefit from the message.
- ◆ The introduction should give a short preview of what will be seen or heard in the presentation.

Body

- ◆ A major topic is usually supported by two or more subtopics.
- ◆ Most major topics begin with general information and progress to more specific information.
- ◆ Each subtopic may be supported by two or more supporting details.

Conclusion

- ◆ Verbally or visually indicate that the message is coming to a close.
- ◆ Give a brief summary of the message, restating your main points.
- ◆ Conclude the message; call the audience to action.

OUTLINE FORMATS

Outlines are usually presented in one of three formats.

Alphanumeric Format

Alphanumeric is a format that consists of numbers and letters in the following order:

- Roman numerals (I)
- Uppercase letters (A)
- Arabic numerals (1)
- Lowercase letters (a)

Full-Sentence Format

Full-sentence is a format that uses alphanumeric structure, but items are written in complete sentences.

Decimal-Order Format

Decimal-order is a format similar to alphanumeric, but it uses only decimals to show how each level of the outline relates to the whole topic.

- 1.0 (main idea)
- 1.1 (major subtopic)
- 1.2 (major subtopic)
- 1.2.1 (supporting point)
- 1.2.2 (supporting point)

Presentation Graphics Software

Presentation graphics are images and text that use a projection system to present information to the audience. Microsoft PowerPoint and OpenOffice Impress are examples of presentation graphics. After an outline has been completed, a basic presentation can be created to complement the subject. To receive the most benefit from presentation graphics software, the text and graphic images must be large and easy to read. Presentation graphics enable a pre-



BROADENING AWARENESS...

AMAZING ASPECTS: Preparing a Persuasive Speech

Since you want to communicate with your audience and stir people to action, you must know your presentation. Generally, it is not a good idea to memorize your whole speech. (One lapse can throw you off.) Just have a thorough knowledge of your message, and have it well outlined. As long as you can express your ideas intelligibly, it does not have to be the exact words you have written down. The audience does not know your exact words. In addition, the audience just needs to understand your message. Good grammar and good sentence structure will help you convey your meaning.

The only time you will want to read your speech verbatim is if you are giving a highly technical report or presentation. To help you remember your message, highlight keywords in the text of your speech and highlight keywords on note cards. Compose your note cards from the complete text so you include all your subtopics and ideas. You may want to memorize your introduction and conclusion. You must know these well because the introduction ignites your audience's attention, and the conclusion should move the audience to action.

sender to create presentation slides that illustrate the material to be presented with text or images. During preparation, slides can be edited easily to help the presenter improve the effectiveness of the presentation.

Visual interest and appeal are important to a presentation but should not distract the audience from the message. Effects that can be created include images, backgrounds, color, animation, and sound.

Summary:



Persuasive presentation is based on facts. Logical, emotional, ethical, and inspirational appeals sway an audience to support an argument. The context of your presentation must be directed to appeal to your audience, and you need to be precise about the ideas you are advocating. An understanding of your audience will help you tailor your ideas to encourage them to believe that inaction is harmful and that action promises a brighter alternative.

The best way to organize your material is by creating an outline. Its logical structure will help you divide your presentation into introductory, main body, and conclusive segments. To complement your message, you can create presentation graphics with text and images to help explain and reinforce your points.

Expanding Your Knowledge:



1. Based on logic, what are four ways to persuade your audience to action?
2. What are some ways in which persuasive appeals are conveyed?
3. In what ways does the unlimited amount of material available to us in the information age influence persuasive presentation?
4. Explain the three basic outline formats. Which is easier for you to use?
5. How can graphics be harmful to your message?

Web Links:



Persuasive Speeches

http://www.srinstitute.com/speaker_opp_request.cfm

Persuasive Speech Topics and Ideas

<http://www.presentationmagazine.com/persuasive-speech-topics-and-ideas-6782.htm>

Outlining

<http://writingcenter.mcc.edu/Outlining.pdf>