

Designing Persuasive Messages: Strategy Options

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Objectives

To learn the basic tasks and strategy options in effective message design



Starting Observations



- Assumptions about developing communication competency
- Assumptions about principles and strategies presented



Six Influence Tasks

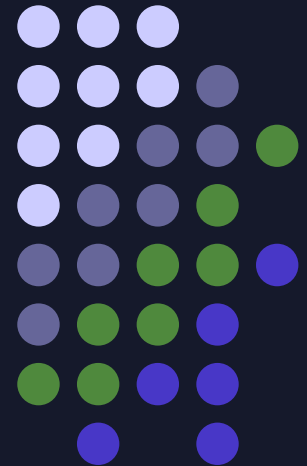
- Developing credibility
 - Discovering audience needs/desires
 - Advocating change
 - Making your message believable
 - Making your message memorable
 - Mobilizing your audience to act
-
- Beginning and Ending your Message



Introduction purpose options

- Gain your audience's attention
- State importance of the topic and/or your key idea
- State your expertise
- Preview what is to come

Influence Task One: Developing Credibility





I. Assumptions

- A. Issue is to overcome the audience's feeling of "no trust."
- B. Building credibility and liking are identity and interpersonal objectives always at work in communication situations



II. Developing Credibility

A. Situational Appropriateness

1. Avoid disrespect

- a. Avoid a tone of moral superiority.
- b. Avoid pressure.

2. Convey respect.

- a. Show understanding of the audience's position or desire to know more about their view.
- b. Endorse views or values of audience.
- c. Acknowledge that opposing views have some legitimate basis.



Credibility, Cont.

- B. Establish your expertise through self-descriptions.
 - 1. Assert that one possesses particular characteristics.
 - a. Trust: e.g., sincerity
 - b. Expertise: education, occupation
 - 2. Provide evidence for your self-description
 - a. Elaborate upon past achievements, or problem-solving ability.
 - b. Show uniqueness on important characteristics.
 - c. Display confidence.



Credibility, cont.

- c. Consider engaging in Acclaiming: Claim that you are responsible for producing positive events.
- D. Express your values.
 - 1. Engage in self-descriptions that utilize audience values (e.g., freedom, the family)
 - 2. Expressions of values can occur in various ways:
 - a. Direct assertion.
 - b. Telling a personal story

Credibility, Cont.



G. Establish Trustworthiness:

1. Disclose your intentions.
 - a. Describe **purpose** of interaction
 - b. Describe **process** of interaction
 - c. Describe how both parties might benefit-**payoff**
2. Positive Attitudes to Promote:
 - a. Equality—acknowledging their expertise, asking questions
 - b. Sharing of concerns, feelings
 - c. Flexibility by offering options, making suggestions, checking for agreement



Develop Liking

- Development of common ground through similarities
- Humor
- Frequent contact-network development

Influence Task Two

**Discovering and Talking about
Audience Needs and Desires:
Audience awareness**





I. Assumptions

- A. Persuasion involves a deliberative process:
Helping your audience reason about solutions to their problems.
- B. The persuader's task is to convince audience of an "exigency"

Developing Awareness about Needs/Desires



- Awareness of Needs and Desires can be developed in two ways:
 - Focus on current reality – Show that present circumstances are intolerable
 - e.g., gaps in literature, consumer problems
 - Expand the ideal – A more nearly ideal state can be realized, visions can be achieved
 - e.g., Singapore

First Approach: Focus on Present Reality and five issues



A. Magnitude of the problem

1. Overview the number of people affected or the extent of the threat
2. Indicate multiple implications of situation
3. Show that the problem is more serious than others
4. Suggest that the problem's effects are enduring



Focus on Present Reality, Cont.

B. Impact of the problem

1. Precisely identify the ways individuals are affected by the situation
2. Show central values are threatened
3. Show things we take for granted are threatened
4. Show those involved must endure a multitude of problems



Focus on Present Reality, Cont.

- c. Focus on those affected by the problem
 - 1. Convey a sense of vulnerability
 - 2. Create concern for others
- D. Tone: Present the problem as an obligation or an opportunity
- E. Urgency
 - 1. The problem is particularly acute now
 - 2. The situation is deteriorating
 - 3. The time for action is limited

Arguments for helping your audience grasp the significance of the problem



1. It is a source of danger or suffering to those who experience it.
2. It has harmed others like us in the past.
3. It prevents the operation of an ideal or growth toward it.
4. It is a fundamental one in that it causes other problems.
5. It is recognized by experts, others.
6. It makes our society or its institutions operate ineffectively.

The Second Approach to Demonstrating Problems: Expanding the Ideal and its Issues



- A. A more nearly ideal state can be realized. Dreams can be actualized now.
- B. Goals and objectives are articulated.
- C. Help audience visualize the better state. Use springboard stories.
- D. The new ideal is attainable.
- E. The new ideal is desirable.

Influence Task Three

Advocacy



I. Assumption About Advocacy



- A. People agree with what they imagine our ideas will do for them.
- B. Advocacy strategies can overlap with Problem strategies



Steps in Effective Advocacy

A. Describe your proposal, idea, or findings
policy recommendations, research findings
Focus on their critical features.

B. Show that your proposal is the best solution to the problem.

1. Proposal will addresses problems, answer questions

2. Show why your proposal is preferable to the alternatives

3. Show how your idea will meet common goals.



Advocacy, cont.

C. Show that additional consequences are desirable. Options:

1. Solving the problem will lead to other desirable consequences.
2. These benefits will last.
3. Your proposal/findings satisfy central human needs or values.

e.g., RS's stress on practical implications for regulators



Advocacy, cont.

D. Show that disadvantages of your proposal/findings are few or are tolerable.

1. Disadvantages are unlikely to occur
2. Disadvantages won't last.
3. The disadvantages would be inevitable with any alternative.

e.g., limitations of research findings

e.g., audience fears of cost



Advocacy, Cont.

Tips on disagreements over consequences of proposals.

1. We may disagree that a particular consequence is likely to occur.
2. We may disagree may disagree about the desirability of those consequences.
3. We may disagree regarding evaluation of a complete set of consequence of a course of action because the audience has differing priorities



Advocacy, cont.

E. Show that your proposal/findings are consistent with your audience's values.

Help your audience identify with your proposal.

Help your audience see that your ideas will result in a meaningful experience.

see p. 15 of booklet.



Advocacy, cont.

G. How will your audience personally benefit?
Consider using personal appeals.

POWER appeals:

1. Increased control of people, time, information, procedures

RECOGNITION appeals:

1. Being first
2. Uniqueness/originality



Personal appeals, Cont.

APPROVAL appeals:

1. popular idea
2. Increase reputation

RESPECT appeals:

1. recognition as an expert
2. solid ideas, plans, skill

Influence Task Four

Make your Message Believable:
Use Stories and/or Arguments



Assumptions about Message Believability



- A. Overcomes the issue of “I just don’t believe you.”
- B. This task is addressed at the same time you are addressing problem and advocacy issues.

II. Two Approaches to Making Messages Believable



I. Use Narratives.

A. Common forms

- a. Stories
- b. Testimonials

B. Criteria for narrative effectiveness

- a. Narrative coherence
- b. Narrative fidelity



II. Make arguments.

1. Arguments consist of evidence and reasoning.
2. Evidence: The foundation for arguments
 - a. Facts, statistics
 - b. Opinion evidence or testimony
 - c. Examples, research findings

Good arguments contain quality evidence.



Criteria for testing evidence

- a. External consistency
- b. Internal consistency
- c. Accessibility & recency
- d. Source Credibility
- e. Sufficiency
- f. Relevance

Good arguments contain valid reasoning.



Reasoning is typically implicit.

Common types of Reasoning:

- a. Analogy
- b. Generalizations
- c. Cause-Effect Reasoning
- d. Authoritative
- e. Deductive

When arguments go wrong: Fallacies



1. A fallacy is an argument that is flawed by irrelevant or inadequate evidence, erroneous reasoning, or improper expression
2. Nature of fallacies
 - a. Fallacies are appealing, deceptive, and hard to recognize

Fallacy types



- a. Faulty reasoning
 - i. False analogy
 - ii. Hasty Generalization
 - iii. Single Cause
- b. Other fallacies
 - i. Ad Hominem
 - ii. Emotive language
 - iii. Straw man
 - iv. Begging the question/non-sequiter



Assess your extended argument.

Use the Reasonableness Standard

1. Normative Clarity--assumptions
2. Situation—specific features considered
3. Consequences—concrete implications
4. Individual Persons—interests & concerns of specific audiences
5. Precedent—relevant past practices
6. Adequacy of specific arguments using standards of practical logic

Reasoning Through Dialogue



1. *Mutual Knowledge*: try to find common ground through initial explanations.
 - a. Initiate new perspectives/viewpoints.
 - b. Elicit information from each other and from others.
2. Extend each other's ideas.
 - a. *Convergence*: add to mutual knowledge by finding out how ideas are related.

Reasoning through Dialogue, cont.



3. *Critical discussion standards:*

- a. Commitment to frame questions and claims in ways that allow evidence to be brought to bear on them.
- b. Commitment to allow any belief to be subjected to criticism if it will advance the discourse.

Influence Task Five

Make Your Message Memorable;
Make your ideas sticky!



I. Assumptions about making messages impressive and memorable



- A. The task is to overcome the case of “I’ve forgotten.”
- B. That is, the task is to overcome message decay.
- C. What makes ideas sticky?

Sticky ideas are = Simple



- a. Find the essential core of your idea
- b. Express it in a compact way
- c. Keep the profound; eliminate nonessential information

Unexpected



- Get your audience's attention
 - 1) Sticky ideas propose surprising "facts".
 - 2) Sticky ideas are interesting!.
- Identify your central message

Concrete



1. Use materials that utilize more than one of our senses
2. Specify concrete implications of general assertions with examples
3. Use vivid description
4. Concrete language helps people understand new and/or difficult ideas.

Credible



- Tell a personal story
- The power of details
- Contextualize statistics to make them more human, more everyday

Emotional/Self-interest



- Associate your idea with ideas that already exist in the audience's mind.
- Emphasize how audience or others are affected personally
- Appeal to the audience's self-interest
 - Ask people to imagine the benefits
 - Caples incorporates self-interest in his headlines by claiming huge benefits with little costs
 - How you can improve your memory in one evening

Encourage audience participation



1. Use rhetorical questions
2. Encourage the audience to provide supporting examples
3. Use suspense
4. Use sentence structures to invite participation, like parallelism

Stories



- Stories create mental stimulation
- Mental stimulation helps us manage emotions and engage in problem-solving
- Stories provide knowledge about how to act
- Stories inspire & motivate

Influence Task Six

Mobilizing your Audience to Act:
Facilitating Behavioral
Commitment



Assumptions about Facilitating Behavioral Commitment



- A. Facilitating audience commitment is about overcoming the case of “I’m in no hurry.”
- B. These strategies are needed when your audience raises objections about you or your proposal.
- C. These strategies are also needed when your audience remains uncertain about acting the way you want them to.

Causes of the “I’m in No Hurry” Response or Obstacles to Commitment



A. Objection or Barrier Types

Proposal Features	Costs	Benefit
Size/Impact	Too much	Too little
Time	Immediate	Delayed
Risk	Certain	Gamble



Barriers, cont.

- B. Relationship or Identity Objectives may not be satisfied
 - 1. No increased power, recognition, or respect
 - 2. Fear of losing face, or not their idea



I. Understand and Handle Objections

- A. Use Two-Sided Messages.
- B. Provide Reassurance.
 - a. Listen, understand the other's objection.
 - b. Clarify the real issue involved with the objection.
 - c. Present your answer in terms of ideas, options or possible solutions.

II. Consider Using Heuristics to Facilitate Commitment



- A. Scarcity—your idea is valuable
- B. Consensus—others like your ideas
- C. Reciprocity—do a favor, ask a favor
- D. Liking—appear likeable
- E. Authority—appear credible



III. Use motivational appeals

- A. People do things for their reasons, their immediate and certain reasons.
- B. Therefore, the best motivational appeals are
 1. Stress the consequences and benefits of your proposal are PERSONAL, not impersonal.
 2. Stress that the consequences and benefits of your proposal will be IMMEDIATE, not delayed.
 3. Stress that the consequences and benefits of your proposal will be CERTAIN, not a gamble.
 4. Connect your proposal to the audience's values.
 5. Tailor your ideas to particular audience members or types of audience members.



V. Facilitate your Audience to act.

- A. Select carefully the Actions you want your Audience to engage in.
Focus on actions that are realistic, easy to execute
- B. Make the action socially pleasant.
- C. Help the audience act.
 - 1. Specify a plan for executing the behavior.
 - 2. Provide information about how to perform the action.
 - 3. Provide direct assistance
 - 4. Provide models performing the action successfully.



Facilitating Action, Cont.

- D. Urge a specific commitment to act.
- E. Invite the audience to think about how they will feel after they act.
- F. Provide simple encouragement: “You can do it!”
- G. Remind the audience if they have performed the behavior before.

Concluding your Message



What are the important issues?



Concluding your Message

- A. Provide a conclusion!
- B. Providing a summary of your main points and thesis.
- C. Consider providing a sense of cohesiveness by referring back to ideas introduced earlier.
- D. Invite the audience to leave with a particular meaning from your ideas.
- E. Thank the audience for listening.
- F. When appropriate, openly ask for support or action from your audience.

Thank you. I wish you well!



- Consider using some of the strategies we've discussed
- Reflecting upon your presentations will result in payoff—greater audience understanding of your ideas and increased interest in using your ideas