

Chapter 13

Informing, Persuading, and Making Special Presentations



Learning Objectives

- 13.1 Describe some of the strategies to enhance the effectiveness of a persuasive message
- 13.2 Describe how developing leadership skills are important to developing persuasion skills

When Andrea Jung joined Avon in 1993 as a consultant, the company was in big trouble. With more women in the daytime labor force, door-to-door cosmetic sales had become much more challenging than in the company's heyday during the mid twentieth century. The company's iconic slogan—"Ding dong, Avon calling"—was no longer a message for success.

Jung knew Avon could do better. She joined the company's marketing department in 1994 and, on the basis of her communication talents and sales instincts, rose to CEO in

- 13.3 Describe communication strategies for making special speaking presentations

1999.¹ As CEO, she reengineered Avon from top to bottom, establishing a trendy flagship store and spa on Fifth Avenue, thereby rejuvenating the brand and helping to shed its old-time image as a line of cosmetics that housewives bought in their homes. She also expanded the company's reach to untapped markets throughout the world and enhanced the sales force by upgrading the use of online sales tools.

Today, you can still purchase Avon products from individual sellers, but you also have many more buying options. Avon is now available in its own stylish boutiques, at other

Again, not all of the people you communicate with will like bite-size messages; some will want more detail. What's important is to remember that some people have very specific expectations about the messages they receive. As we've said throughout this book, assess your audience to determine the goal of your message as well as the best format for communicating it.

USE SIMPLE IDEAS Mark Twain told a story about a Missouri farmer who ran for the state legislature five times but lost each election. He didn't lose because he didn't practice his campaign speeches; he gave his speeches to his cows each morning. The problem was, according to Twain, that he used "high-falutin'" words when he should have used shorter terms. He described his audience as "my enlightened constituents" and suggested he was trying to "obtain a mandate" for his "legislative mission." During one of his morning rehearsals, one of his cows knocked out his front teeth in such a way that the farmer could only use one-syllable words. The result: He won every election in his career from that day on.⁴

When you inform others, your job is to get your ideas across to your audience, not to see how much information you can cram in. The simpler your ideas and phrases, the greater the chance that your audience will remember them. We don't mean you should talk down to your audience. Listeners can sense a speaker's superior know-it-all attitude, and they won't like it. Simplify your message, but don't be condescending.

PACE INFORMATION FLOW Organize your talk so that you present an even stream of information, rather than bunch up a number of significant details around one point. If you present too much new information too quickly, you may overwhelm your audience, and your listeners' ability to understand may falter.

USE ADULT LEARNING STRATEGIES If your audience consists of adult listeners, you will need to ensure that you deliver your message in the way that adults learn best. Adult learners prefer:⁵

- To be given information they can use immediately
- To be actively involved in the learning process
- To connect their life experiences with the new information they learn
- To know how the new information is relevant to their busy lives
- To know how the information will solve a problem
- To receive information that is relevant to their needs

Most people who work in business have in-baskets on their desks to hold work that must be done. Similarly, each of us has a kind of mental in-basket: an agenda of what we

want or need from a presentation. Remember the characteristics of adult learners and the importance of adapting your message to others. You will hold your audience's interest, and also have more success in informing them, if you tailor your information to address what is in your audience's literal or metaphorical in-basket.

REINFORCE IDEAS NONVERBALLY Gestures serve the purpose of accenting or emphasizing key phrases, as italics do in written communication. A well-placed pause can emphasize or reinforce a point. Raising or lowering your voice can also reinforce a key idea. Movement can help emphasize major ideas. Moving from behind the lectern to tell a personal anecdote can signal that something special and more intimate is about to be said. Finally, photos, images, charts, and other visual information may be just what your listeners need to better understand your key ideas, rather than you piling on more words.

13.1.1: Presenting Briefings

A *briefing* (or a *brief*), as you might guess from the name, is a short talk that provides information to an audience. A briefing can focus on what has happened in the past, what is currently happening on a given project or topic, or what may happen in the future. The military, public safety organizations (police departments, security departments), medical organizations, and other organizations that need clear, short summaries of information almost exclusively rely on briefings to ensure the exchange of information.

Briefings are short (from 5 to 15 minutes), so they typically don't have an extended or formal introduction. You should still be mindful of catching your listeners' attention, but not with a lengthy story or illustration. Just get to your points after a very short overview. Listeners expect a brief to be quick.

Because several briefs are often presented one after another, the first brief may provide a longer introduction to introduce the briefings that will follow. For example, if you're giving a briefing about the income-and-loss statement for the past quarter and you're part of a four-person team, each of whom is sharing information, provide a short overview of your message, present your key ideas, summarize them, link to what the next person will say, and sit down.

The organizational pattern for briefings is usually topical or chronological. It's still appropriate to use transition phrases and signposts ("I have three points to make. First . . ."), but the transitional phrases are shorter and less pronounced than in a more extended informative presentation.

Some briefings can be quite formal, and listeners may expect a no-nonsense delivery style with little use of humor and lots of information. In other organizational cultures, however, a briefing is expected to be informal and casual. It's important to be aware of your audience as you make decisions on how to customize your briefing content.

motivate listeners to perform the skill or task being taught as well as to provide them with information.

Presenting training is similar to any presentation; it's essential to focus on the needs, interests, and backgrounds of your listeners. Training that does not address a trainee's needs or specific job functions is not effective training. Because the primary purpose of any training program is to respond to the learning needs of the trainee, Figure 13.1 presents a *needs-centered model*.

Figure 13.1: A Needs-Centered Training Model



Drawing on adult learning theory, a trainer should view himself or herself less as a lecturer and more as a facilitator. Adult learners bring their own experiences to the training session; they want to focus on real problems that are in their literal or metaphorical in-baskets or on their to-do lists. A trainer follows the steps in Figure 13.1 in order to draw on those experiences and equip trainees to address problems.

ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL AND TRAINEE NEEDS

You may notice that Figure 13.1 closely resembles the audience-centered model of presentations that we introduced in Chapter 11. At the center of the model in Figure 13.1—and the first and crucial ongoing step in any training—is the process of identifying the needs of the organization and those of the specific trainees who will attend the training session: the audience. Every other aspect of designing and delivering a training presentation depends on the needs of the trainees.

The process of identifying trainee needs is quite similar to analyzing your audience when delivering a

presentation. For example, many trainers determine their audience's needs by asking them—using surveys, questionnaires, or interviews—what they need. In addition to analyzing the needs of individuals, it's also important to consider the needs of the organization. What does it need employees or volunteers to do?

ANALYZE THE TRAINING TASK Viewing the model in Figure 13.1 as a clock, begin at the top and work your way around clockwise to explore the steps of designing and delivering a training presentation. After you've figured out what trainees need (for example, skill in listening or conflict management), an early critical step in designing a training program is to thoroughly analyze the specific task you want the trainees to perform. You conduct a task analysis. A task analysis is a detailed, step-by-step description of precisely what a trainee should do and know in order to perform a particular skill. As the trainer, if you are going to teach someone how to prepare and deliver a sales presentation, you first need to know what the steps in that process are before you teach them to others. Most likely, you will have only limited time to teach a skill, so you may have to focus only on the most critical steps. A task analysis lets you discover what the essential elements of a task are. (Our needs-centered training model is itself a simplified task analysis of how to train someone. Each piece of the model represents an essential step in the process.)

DEVELOP TRAINING OBJECTIVES After you have figured out the steps in teaching a particular skill, it's important to develop objectives or learning outcomes that you want your trainees to achieve. It's important to specify the precise behavior you want trainees to perform at the end of the training. We begin each chapter in this book with a list of learning objectives. Reviewing those objectives will give you an idea of the format and style for training objectives. Training objectives are also similar to the specific purpose statement for a presentation, discussed in Chapter 11. Training objectives specify what you want trainees to be able to do following the training presentation.

ORGANIZE TRAINING CONTENT Once you have your precise training objectives in hand, you can begin drafting the information that trainees need to know and describing in more detail the behaviors that they will be expected to perform. The most typical organizational patterns for training content include (1) chronological (a step-by-step sequence of what someone does first, second, and so on), (2) by complexity (from simplest or easiest to learn to more complex or more detailed information), and (3) topical (identifying the natural divisions in a topic).

DETERMINE TRAINING METHODS To train someone, you don't just talk to them. Adult learners are not interested in hearing a three- or four-hour lecture; that's not

of a read-write Web 2.0 technology that permits communicators to interact with one another with seamless ease, including sharing photos, videos, web links, and instant messaging capabilities.

- **Wikis.** Wikis are collaborative web-based sites that permit many people to share information with one another. The distinctive feature of wikis is the open-editing function that permits all users to develop a resource collaboratively. Well-known sites, such as the encyclopedia Wikipedia, the travel guide Wiki Travel, and the how-to manuals WikiHow, are places on the web where you not only can share information with others but also can contribute to the information presented. Of course, when retrieving information from a Wiki source, consider the source. Although evidence indicates that the self-policing of the content helps keep the information current and accurate, there is always the potential for misinformation to be posted on a wiki site.
- **Internet Video.** If you've used Skype, FaceTime, or a host of other Internet video software programs and apps, you know how easy it is to hold a video conversation with someone who is miles or continents away from you. The software or apps you need are often free, and the video cameras and microphones required for video conversations come built-in to most computers and all smart phones.
- **Podcast.** A podcast is a radio broadcast that uses the technology of an iPod through iTunes to share a message with others. Originally, podcasts were audio messages, but through vodcasts it's now relatively easy to share video and audio messages. You don't need to travel to India, China, or even San Francisco; you can present your report to your superiors with a podcast or vodcast.

Regardless of the technology used to solve problems and share information, it's people that make communication possible, an important point to keep in mind in all your workplace interactions. Malcolm Gladwell, in noting the importance of the human element in communicating with others, said this:

Technology does not and cannot change the underlying dynamics of human problems: it doesn't make it easier to live or motivate or disarm or convince.¹⁰

13.2: Persuading Others

13.2 Describe how developing leadership skills are important to developing persuasion skills.

Peruse the management and leadership section of Amazon or any brick-and-mortar bookstore, and you'll find books about how to influence others. The best-selling business management book of all time is Dale Carnegie's classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. At the heart of influencing others is being able to persuade them. To persuade

someone is to change or reinforce the person's attitudes (likes and dislikes), beliefs (what is perceived to be true or false), values (what is considered good or bad), or behavior. As we discuss later in this chapter, sales presentation is a type of persuasive presentation you'll commonly encounter in a professional setting.

Informative and persuasive speaking are related processes. When you interview for a job, you're doing more than simply presenting information about yourself; you're making a persuasive presentation on why the organization should hire you. A key difference is that in a persuasive presentation, you want the listener to do more than merely remember what you say; you want to change or reinforce what the listener likes, believes, values, or does.

We've noted that to lead is to influence, so being able to persuade others is a vital leadership skill. Think of any great leader, in business or politics, past or present, and undoubtedly you'll be thinking of someone who possessed effective persuasion skills. Not all leaders use the same persuasive methods. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi led through promoting nonviolent means of achieving their goals. In leading the United States out of the Depression and through World War II, Franklin Roosevelt used his skill as a communicator as well as his behind-the-scenes power and influence to achieve his goals. Warren Buffett and Jeff Bezos are examples of business leaders who are sometimes controversial but also inspire and motivate others.

To develop strong leadership and persuasive skills, you need first to understand principles of persuasion and then learn specific strategies for persuading others.

13.2.1: Principles of Persuasion

How does persuasion work? What motivates people to do things that they wouldn't do unless they are persuaded to do them? Let's look at four possible explanations.

PEOPLE RESPOND TO RESOLVE DISSONANCE When you are confronted with information that is inconsistent with your current thinking or feelings, you experience a kind of psychological discomfort called *cognitive dissonance*. You can be persuaded by being convinced that you have a problem and then pointed in a direction that will solve your problem. For example, if you have ever driven an automobile after consuming a drink or two, then seen a public service announcement from Mothers Against Drunk Driving documenting how even two drinks can contribute to serious traffic accidents, you've likely experienced cognitive dissonance. The incompatibility of your behavior and your knowledge is likely to make you feel uncomfortable. And your discomfort may prompt you to change your thoughts, likes or dislikes, feelings, or behavior so that you can restore your comfort level or sense of balance—in this case, by not driving after drinking.

you don't do X, then awful things will happen to you. "If you don't buy this insurance policy, then your loved ones may not be able to pay the mortgage and they may be homeless." "If you don't wear a seat belt, then you are more likely to die in an automobile accident." "If you don't support the development of a new hospital in our community, lives could be lost if we have to travel to the next county for medical attention." A variety of research studies support the following principles regarding the use of fear as a motivator.¹²

- A strong threat to a family member or someone whom members of the audience care about will often be more successful than a fear appeal directed at the audience members themselves.
- The more respected the speaker, the greater the likelihood that the appeal to fear will work.
- Fear appeals are more successful if you convince your audience that the threat is real and will affect them unless they take action.

PEOPLE RESPOND TO POSITIVE MESSAGES A TV commercial for a "big box" department store pledges, "For every dollar you spend in our store, we will return 5 percent to the public schools in your community; your students will have new computers to help them learn." A candidate for chair of the board of directors asserts, "If you support me for board chair, I can assure you our stock price and sales will increase." We've all encountered these kinds of positive appeals. Politicians, salespeople, and most successful business and professional persuaders know that one way to change or reinforce your attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior is to use a positive motivational appeal. Positive motivational appeals are verbal messages promising that good things will happen if the speaker's advice is followed. The key to using positive motivational appeals is to know what your listeners value. Most people value a comfortable, prosperous life; stimulating, exciting activity; a sense of accomplishment; world peace; and overall happiness and contentment. In a persuasive speech, you can motivate your listeners to respond to your message by describing what positive things will happen to them if they follow your advice.

13.2.2: Strategies for Persuading

Greek philosopher and scholar Aristotle said that rhetoric is the process of discovering the available means of persuasion.¹³ What are those available means? Aristotle singled out three primary strategies: (1) emphasize the credibility or ethical character of a speaker, which he called *ethos*; (2) use logical arguments, or *logos*; and (3) use emotional appeals, or *pathos*, to move an audience. The following strategies for developing your credibility as a speaker, and using logic, evidence, and emotion to persuade and motivate listeners are based on Aristotle's three strategies and bolstered by contemporary research. We'll also revisit some

of our strategies of message organization and discuss how to adapt ideas to people and people to ideas.

EFFECTIVELY ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY If you were going to buy a new computer, to whom would you turn for advice? Perhaps you would consult your brother, the computer geek, or your roommate, the computer science major. Or you might seek advice from *Consumer Reports*, the monthly publication of studies of various consumer products. In other words, you would turn to a source you consider knowledgeable, competent, and trustworthy—a source you think is credible.

Credibility is a listener's perception of a speaker's competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism. Remember that your listeners, not you, determine whether you have credibility. It's important to be perceived as credible when presenting any message, but especially critical when trying to persuade someone. The more credibility you have, the more likely it is that your listeners will believe you, trust you, and like you.

How do you establish your credibility? It's a centuries-old question. Aristotle thought public speakers should be ethical, possess good character, display common sense, and be concerned for the well-being of their audience. Quintilian, a Roman teacher of public speaking, agreed, advising that a speaker should be "a good person speaking well." Modern research has generally supported these ancient speculations about the elements that enhance a speaker's credibility.

Credibility is not a single factor but consists of multiple elements. Your goal is to be perceived as highly credible on each element of credibility when you speak. Ideally, you should be perceived as competent, trustworthy, and dynamic.

- **Competence** is the perception that a person is skilled, knowledgeable, and informed about the subject he or she is discussing. You will be more persuasive if you can convince your listeners you know something about your topic. How? You can use verbal messages effectively by talking about relevant personal experience with the topic. If you have lived in a high-rise condominium, you'll have more credibility as a high-rise condo salesperson than someone who has only lived in a ranch-style house. You can also cite evidence to support your ideas. Even if you have not lived in a high-rise condo yourself, you can be prepared with information about the advantages of apartment living.
- **Trustworthiness** is a second element of credibility. While delivering a speech, you need to convey honesty and sincerity to your audience. You can't do this simply by saying "Trust me." You have to earn trust. You can do so by demonstrating that you are interested in and experienced with your topic. Again, speaking from personal experience makes you seem a more trustworthy speaker. Conversely, having something to gain by persuading your audience may make you suspect in their eyes.

major and minor premises must both be true. If you can prove that all top-selling auto dealers advertise on TV, and if it is true that those that advertise sell more cars, then your conclusion will be sound.

You use *causal reasoning* when you relate two or more events in such a way as to conclude that one or more of the events caused the others. For example, you might argue that public inoculation programs during the twentieth century eradicated smallpox.

As noted when we discussed cause and effect as a persuasive organizational strategy, there are two ways to structure a causal argument. One is by reasoning from cause to effect, predicting a result from a known fact. You know that you have had an inch of rain over the last few days, so you predict that the aquifer level will rise. The inch of rain is the cause; the rising aquifer is the effect. The other way to structure an argument is by reasoning from a known effect to the cause. National Transportation Safety Board accident investigators reason from effect to cause when they reconstruct airplane wreckage to find clues to the cause of an air disaster.

Recap

Inductive, Deductive, and Causal Reasoning

Type of Reasoning	Reasoning Begins With	Reasoning Ends With	Conclusion Is	Example
Inductive	specific examples	a general conclusion	probable	Dell and IBM computers are all reliable. Therefore, PCs are reliable.
Deductive	a general statement	a specific conclusion	certain	All financial officers at this company have advanced degrees. Tom Hryson is the chief financial officer at this company. Therefore, Tom Hryson has an advanced degree.
Causal	something known	a speculation about causes or effects of what is known	likely	The number of people with undergraduate degrees has risen steadily since 1980. The increasing number has caused a glut in the job market for people with degrees.

Trying to establish a causal link where none exists is one type of **logical fallacy**. Unfortunately, not all people who try to persuade you will use sound evidence and reasoning. Some will try to develop arguments in ways that are irrelevant or inappropriate. To be a better informed listener, as well as a more ethical persuasive speaker, you should be aware of the common logical fallacies described in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1: Reasoning Fallacies

Fallacy	Description	Example
Causal Fallacy An inappropriate or invalid causal link and effect connection between two things or events.	There is no logical or causal connection between the appearance of a rainbow and the day of the week.	If you enter the new software you can't be, then you are likely to have more fun of course.
Bandwagon Fallacy The argument that because everyone believes something it must be right, or because many believe it, it must be effective.	Saying "everyone knows" is a fallacy attempt to suggest that the state of the opinion, rather than the evidence itself, is what should "win" on the marketplace and also agree.	Everyone knows this product is defective.
Either-Or Fallacy The oversimplification of an issue into a choice between only two alternatives or possibilities.	There are more than two options for solving the problem. For example, ABC requires variable components for the maximum address a hard address.	Because of the cost-cutting of our schools, either we pass the school bond to build new schools or we'll have to shut our schools to another school district.
Hasty Generalization Drawing a conclusion from too little evidence or insufficient evidence.	One example does not provide enough evidence to reach a sweeping general conclusion that might be made by trying to find evidence. It could simply have been an isolated error.	One date I didn't receive the correct change when I made my purchase at Target last week. This is evidence that I should stop shopping at Target last week.
Personal Attack Attacking the person charged with a duty rather than addressing the issue.	The issue may be a sound one. Simply attacking the person without trying the idea proposed does not address the proposed idea.	John's idea that we should change our logo is a bad idea because John has a bad idea in the first place.
Red Herring Using irrelevant facts or arguments to distract the listener from the issue under discussion.	The representative is trying to use the colleague's indiscretion to distract attention from the issue of funds raised rather than address it directly.	A member of Congress who is attacked for inappropriately using "spin" arguments by talking about the need for a solution of a colleague.
Appeal to Emotion/Anxiety Using someone without the scientific information or expertise to endorse an idea or product.	Saying "because I used to smoke while my sister is a doctor" rather than not prove the claim is good, healthy, or safe.	The new vegetable diet for you with the greatest benefit, you will be fit.

USE EMOTION EFFECTIVELY AND ETHICALLY TO PERSUADE People often make decisions based not on logic, but on emotion.¹⁴ Advertisers know this. Think of the soft-drink commercials you see on television. There is little rational reason that people should spend any part of their food budget on soft drinks; they are "empty calories." So soft-drink advertisers turn instead to emotional appeals, striving to connect their product with feelings of pleasure.

One way to make an emotional appeal is with emotion-arousing verbal messages. Words with positive

II. SOLUTION: We should slightly increase property taxes to raise money to finance improvements in our schools.

- A. We could hire additional teachers to help improve test scores.
- B. We could increase compensation for our best teachers.
- C. We could hire a volunteer coordinator to increase parent volunteers in our school.

In the *cause-and-effect organization* pattern, a speaker can either identify a situation and then discuss the resulting effects (*cause-effect*) or present a situation and then explore its causes (*effect-cause*).

Regardless of which variation you choose, you should once again apply the principle of being aware of your communication with yourself and others. Specifically, you must analyze the problem and determine the critical causal link and then convince your listeners that the link is valid. An effect may have more than one cause. For example, sales at your company are 10% behind sales figures at this time last year. As sales manager, you are responsible for analyzing the issues and presenting your analysis to the company CEO. Here's a way you could organize your message:

I. CAUSE: The design of our product line is out of date.

- A. We have not hired any new engineers in the past five years.
- B. Our engineers are using outdated computer equipment.
- C. Our engineers are relying on outdated software to design our product.

II. EFFECT: Our sales are down.

- A. Our customers find our competitor's product more up-to-date.
- B. Our customers are replacing the products they have purchased from us with products from our competitor.
- C. Our customers have indicated that they do not intend to purchase our product in the future.

When using a *cause-and-effect* organizational strategy, it's not enough just to assert your causes and probable effects. You need to provide evidence to provide the link between the causes and effects.

A variation on cause and effect is organizing a presentation from effect to cause. For example:

- I. **EFFECT:** Holiday sales are sluggish. People aren't buying as many gifts as they did in previous years.
- II. **CAUSE:** The recession has decreased customers' purchasing power.

A third way to organize your efforts to persuade an audience is especially useful when you are facing an *unreceptive audience*—one that does not agree with your point of view or your specific proposition. *Refutation* is an organizational strategy by which you identify objections to your proposition and then refute those objections with arguments and evidence. It is better to present both sides of an issue rather than just your own position if your audience is skeptical of your position.

It is most effective to organize a persuasive speech by refutation when you know what your listeners' chief objections to your proposition are. In fact, if you do not acknowledge such objections, the audience will probably think about them during your speech anyway. Credible facts and statistics will generally be more effective than emotional arguments in supporting your points of refutation.

Suppose you represent a large hotel chain that wants to build a new luxury hotel in a southwestern city. The hotel chain has purchased most of the property it needs to start construction, except for one prime piece of property owned by two sisters who have a tamale stand on their property. You have approached the sisters, but they don't want to sell. They have agreed to meet with you to hear your final offer, so you'll need to be especially effective in refuting their concerns. You understand that the price you're offering is not the reason they are balking at selling. Rather, they promised their mother, who passed away last year, that they would always maintain the family business at the same location where their mother started the business. Here's an outline for a presentation to the two sisters based on the refutation organizational strategy:

- I. We would like to build a hotel on this property, and we will honor your mother by naming our exclusive rooftop restaurant after her.
- II. In addition to purchasing your property, we would like to purchase your mother's recipe for tamales and feature them in our new restaurant.
- III. We would like to hire both of you as consultants to the hotel to work in the restaurant and be in charge of quality control of all food served in the hotel.

The presentation to the sisters consists of major points offered to directly refute their objections. When you use a *refutation* strategy, you address the specific concerns and offer solutions to the objections you know you will encounter.

Like refutation, the fourth organizational strategy is unique to persuasive speaking. The *motivated sequence*, devised by Alan Monroe, is a five-step organizational strategy for a persuasive presentation.¹⁷ This simple yet effective strategy integrates the problem-and-solution

what you suggest to avoid further problems. In either case, you use word pictures—lively descriptions that appeal to listeners' senses (sight, taste, smell, sound, and touch). Or you might combine both approaches. The problem will be solved if your solution is adopted, but things will get increasingly worse if it is not.

Here's how Kotcher helped his listeners visualize how the world is changing and how some previous college graduates have capitalized on being globally aware and active:

Justin Lane, for instance, a 1995 . . . graduate, is the New York bureau chief for the European Pressphoto Agency. He won the Pulitzer in 2002 for breaking news photography for his freelance contributions to the *The New York Times'* coverage of the September 11 attacks. A year later, he traveled to Iraq to document cultural looting, the crisis facing Iraqi women, and the uncovering of mass graves. His photographs from Iraq garnered two gallery shows in New York and appearances in numerous newspapers, magazines, and books.

Then there's Chris McKee, also class of 1995. . . . He made an award-winning documentary that has opened up the little-known world of Mongolian nomads to the rest of the world. And Tyler Hicks, class of 1992, named by *American Photo* magazine as one of the twenty-five most important photographers, is large part because of his compelling images from war-torn places like Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan.²²

5. **Action.** The action step is your speech's conclusion. You remind your audience of the problem (outlined in the need step), give them the solution (the satisfaction step), remind them of the great things that will happen if they follow your advice (positive visualization) or the bad things that will happen if they don't (negative visualization). Finally, you tell them what they need to do next (the action step).

To finish his presentation, Raymond Kotcher made this specific recommendation to his listeners:

So, this email to you is just about finished. Yet I can't close without giving you some personal advice—about what I have gleaned in my career and life since those impossibly cold mornings walking to class at 640 Comm Ave. Here goes:

- **Engage your curiosity.** Be indefatigable in ferreting out the answers to questions that will inform a world, assist a client, uncover an injustice, right a wrong.
- **Never forget your integrity and credibility.** Develop your voice. You're a skilled communicator. Always strive to improve and develop your communication skills and apply them step a deep understanding for all that has preceded you. Combine that with your personal experiences and what is important to you. And be willing to listen and to be taught, because learning NEVER ends.

- **Foster your creativity.** Oh, how the world, especially the business world, seeks creative and innovative thinkers who can communicate their imaginative ideas.²³

Donald C. Bryant defines rhetoric as “the process of adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas.”²⁴ You can adapt the motivated sequence to the needs of your topic and your audience. For example, if you are speaking to a knowledgeable, receptive audience, you do not need to spend a great deal of time on the need step. The audience already knows that the need is serious. They may, however, feel helpless to do anything about it. Therefore, you would want to emphasize the satisfaction and action steps.

However, if you are speaking to a neutral or apathetic audience, you will need to spend time getting their attention and proving that a problem exists, that it is significant, and that it affects them personally. You will emphasize the attention, need, and visualization steps. And if you are speaking to a hostile audience, you should spend considerable time on the need step. Convince your audience that the problem is significant and that they should be concerned about it.

2 Persuading the Receptive Audience

- Identify with your audience by stating how you are similar to them, showing characteristics you have in common.
- Emphasize common interests and describe areas of agreement.
- Provide a clear objective, because they are receptive to you, tell your listeners what you want them to do.
- Use emotional appeals appropriately. Using stories, illustrations, and other methods of ethically appealing to emotions can be effective with a receptive audience.

3 Persuading the Neutral Audience

- Because your listeners are not engaged or may be uninterested in you or your topic, gain and maintain their attention using appropriate attention-catching methods such as rhetorical questions, questions, startling statistics, and interesting examples.
- Refer to beliefs, attitudes, and concerns that are important to the listener.
- Identify the needs of the listener and address those needs.
- Show how the topic affects people your listeners care about.
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish given that your listeners are neutral or apathetic.

4 Persuading the Unreceptive Audience

- Because your listeners are not in agreement with your goals and objectives, don't tell them you are going to try to convince them to change their minds and support your position.
- Make sure you present your strongest arguments first.
- Acknowledge opposing points of view and then use evidence and facts (rather than emotional appeals or opinions) to refute their ideas.
- Don't expect a major shift in attitudes or behavior.

9. **NEGOTIATE FOR YOUR FIRST JOB.** Find a job that seems to be a good fit with your skills, then negotiate your salary and commission.
10. **SET YOUR FIRST-YEAR SALES GOALS.** In consultation with your employer, determine your first-year sales estimate.

13.2.4: Developing Your Sales Message

We've discussed the importance of motivation in persuasion. Selling is persuasion, and motivating customers is essential in selling. Communication consultant Granville Toopgood suggests that when making a sales pitch, you motivate customers by connecting with their needs. As Toopgood puts it:²⁶

- You're not selling soap. You're selling sex.
- You're not selling perfume. You're selling love.
- You're not selling cars. You're selling excitement.
- You're not selling jeans. You're selling adventure.

You also need to organize your message. Most sales presentations are organized using the problem-and-solution pattern. The five-step motivated sequence (which, as we noted, is a form of the problem-and-solution approach) is a good formula for structuring sales presentations by catching attention, establishing need, satisfying the need by offering a solution, visualizing the benefits of the solution or describing how the need will not be met if the solution is not adopted, and then identifying a specific action to take. The suggestions for organizing a sales presentation we describe below are based on the motivated sequence.²⁷

HOOK YOUR LISTENER As we've noted, presenters need to get listeners' attention. A good salesperson does more than merely get a customer's attention; a good salesperson is able to "hook" the customer, to gain and keep the person's focus. In most cases, you have to grab your listeners quickly. To hook them, ask them an opening question that is based on what you suspect they may need ("Are you interested in a car that costs less yet looks expensive?") or addresses a fear they may have ("Would you like a car that will protect your family if you have an accident?").

IDENTIFY THE CUSTOMER'S KEY ISSUE After hooking the customer, you need to address what he or she needs or wants. Knowing your customer's interests, needs, desires, fears, and hopes is essential for making a sale. How do you find out what your customer likes and needs? Ask. After you ask, you have one more task: Listen. An effective sales message doesn't begin with the salesperson immediately extolling the virtues of the product. First, ask questions that qualify your customer. To qualify a customer is to identify whether the customer can afford the product or

service you are selling and to learn how to best approach the customer. Does the customer have a family? If so, would he or she be motivated by appealing to concerns for their safety? Is the customer most interested in a low price? Knowing what customers want can help you adapt and customize your messages to them, just as any good presenter adapts a message to his or her audience.

It's also important to have a positive relationship with your customers. Joe Girard, the number-one car salesman in the United States for 11 years in a row, would send more than 13,000 cards to his customers. He'd wish them everything from happy birthday to happy George Washington's Day. The message on the front of each card was simple. It said, "I like you." He sold twice as many cars as whoever came in second place. Customers identified with Joe; they liked him. And they came back to buy more cars from him.²⁸

If the customer does not explicitly tell you what he or she wants, you may need to ask specific questions, such as the following, to identify the customer's needs or issues:

- What do you like best about what you are currently using?
- What would an ideal product look like?
- What do you like least about what you are currently using?
- What is missing from what you're currently using?
- How many of these do you use each week?
- What are the key things you're looking for in a new ... ?
- If you bought our product, when would you need it delivered?
- What could we do to get your business?

If you already suspect what the customer's needs are, then you can directly identify how what you are selling meets the needs, solves a problem, or addresses an issue that concerns the customer. Your knowledge of what your competitor has to offer and what the customer needs and your ability to briefly and quickly get to the heart of what the customer wants will increase your chances of making the sale.

MAKE THE RECOMMENDATION After you have analyzed, or qualified, the customer, you'll want to note how your product or service addresses the issues you've identified. Although you don't need to ask for the sale quite yet, you need to describe what you're selling and link your product or service to the customer's needs. Especially if you're selling several models or versions of the same product (such as a car, a computer, or an insurance benefit package), you'll need to direct the customer to a specific recommendation.

When making your recommendation, explain and demonstrate how the product works. Provide a step-by-step overview of what the product does. If appropriate, let the customer try the product. Most grocery stores know that one way to sell cheese is to give away free samples. Letting



"If they don't like our proposal I'll show them the kittens. Everybody likes kittens."

situations, the customer is not likely to simply say yes or "I'll take it" after you've hooked the person, identified the issue, made the recommendation, stressed the benefits, and provided a closing. Customers will likely have questions, concerns, and objections to the claims you've made. How you respond to those will often determine whether you get the sale or not. Consider the following suggestions.

Some customers may not explicitly state what is bothering them. For example, they may not say, "I don't have enough money to buy what you're selling." So, you need to listen between the lines if the customer says something like "I'm not sure I'm prepared to buy this product now" or "Buying this product doesn't fit into my plans right now." If price appears to be the unspoken objection, you may need to suggest a payment plan spread over a period of time, direct the customer to a less expensive option, or reconfigure the product so it costs less. The more you can remove hidden agendas, the more likely you are to be able to address the specific concern.

How do you determine a customer's real objections? You listen, observe, ask good questions, and listen some more. Open-ended questions such as "What questions do you have about this product?" or "Is there something that I could do today that would help you make a commitment?" can often help you find a customer's underlying objection. If you can then successfully address that objection, you've got the sale.

If a customer says no, or "I'll need to think about this" or "I'm not sure I'm ready to decide today," avoid pressuring the customer, but try to keep the conversation going. We don't encourage such high-pressure tactics as "This is a one-time offer, only good in the next hour" or "You must decide today." It's also unethical to claim that the product is the last one left when there are more in the back room. Instead, just continue to do your best to listen and see if you can identify what it is that is keeping the customer from saying yes. By asking follow-up questions, exploring objections, listening

for clues, and observing nonverbal behavior, you may still be able to successfully respond to a rejection. Although some people actually do need more time to think, you're less likely to get the sale if the customer leaves your location or if you are no longer in contact with the person.

Leaders Communicating @ Work

Ethics Is Everything

According to Barbara J. Krumsiek, chief executive and chair of the Calvert Group Ltd., an investment firm, ethics is everything when it comes to leadership. She describes her view that ethics is an element in every communication action, especially in the finance world.

Ethics is how you think about things when it's not written down. I tell Calvert people you make decisions every day, hundreds of them, that have ethical content. We couldn't possibly write codes of ethics to cover everything you do. So therefore, you're going to have to do the right thing. I'm counting on you to do the right thing.²⁷

Ethics are implicit in every communication and leadership action you undertake, especially if you're trying to persuade someone to do something or sell them something. You have an ethical responsibility to present information that is honest, accurate, relevant, and on point.

A customer may ask you something about what you're selling that you don't know. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so, and find the answer quickly. Promise to get back to the customer with the answer by a specific time or date. Be sure to keep your promise.

One maxim that has served salespeople well is "Underpromise and overdeliver." Don't promise more than you know your product or service can offer, and work to provide even more than the customer expects. Although customers generally do not like surprises, they are usually delighted when what they've purchased surprises them with more than what was promised.

One of the biggest sales mistakes new salespeople make is talking too much after they have made a sale. Once the customer has made the decision to buy a product or service, don't keep describing additional benefits.

13.3: Making Special Presentations

13.3 Describe communication strategies for making special speaking presentations.

Besides informing and persuading others, you may be called on to introduce another speaker, present an award, receive an

and who may themselves aspire to similar achievements. In what has become one of the most often quoted acceptance speeches ever made, William Faulkner dedicated his 1950 Nobel Peace Prize for Literature to:

the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will some day stand here where I am standing.⁵²



Acceptance speeches have a reputation for being boring. If you keep your speech brief and behave graciously, your audience will agree that the right person received the award.

13.3.4: Making a Toast

It's not uncommon in a business or professional setting to have an opportunity to propose a toast. It could be at a business lunch or dinner, or at the beginning or ending of an informal or social meeting with a client or customer. A toast is a brief salute to the occasion or is dedicated to a

particular person, usually accompanied by a round of drinks and immediately followed by the raising or clinking together of glasses or goblets. The purpose of a toast is to enhance relationships, celebrate an accomplishment, or remember a past event. The custom is said to have taken its name from the old custom of tossing a bit of bread or a crouton into a beverage for flavoring.⁵³ "Drinking the toast" was somewhat like enjoying a dunked doughnut.

The modern toast is usually quite short, only a few sentences at most. Some toasts incorporate a quotation you might remember that seems appropriate to the occasion as, for example, one given at a business dinner by a client:

I propose a toast. We are a long way from home this evening. But as we have worked together in our meetings today, you and your staff have made us feel very welcome. It was Robert Frost who said, "Home is a place where when you go there they have to take you in." Thank you, colleagues, for taking us in this evening and making us feel so much at home.

If you are asked to make an impromptu toast, let your audience and the occasion dictate what you say. Sincerity is more important than wit. At a dinner one of your authors attended in Moscow a few years ago, all the guests were asked to stand at some point during the meal and offer a toast. Although this Russian custom took all of us by surprise, one of our friends gave a heartfelt and well-received toast that went something like this:

We have spent the past week enjoying both the natural beauty and the many marvels of your country. We have visited the exquisite palaces of the czars and stood in amazement before some of the world's great art treasures. But we have also discovered that the most important resource of Russia is the warmth of her people. Here's to new and lasting friendships.

Our Russian hosts were most appreciative. The rest of us were impressed. Our friend's toast was a resounding success because she spoke sincerely about her audience and the occasion.

Summary: Informing, Persuading, and Making Special Presentations

13.1: Describe some of the strategies to enhance the effectiveness of a persuasive message.

Principles of informing others, whether in a presentation, brief, or report, include these ideas:

Use simple ideas. Pace the flow of the information. Relate new information to what listeners already know. Use adult

learning strategies. Relate to listeners' interests. Build in redundancy. Reinforce ideas verbally and nonverbally.

These are the nine steps of the need-centered training model:

1. Anchor all training processes in analyzing the organizational and trainee needs.

Chapter 14

Writing for Business



Learning Objectives

- 14.1** Report some of the factors that make good business writing
- 14.2** Examine how appropriate use of technology and email at the workplace enhances the image of the organization
- 14.3** Describe how to write effective and appropriate business letters
- 14.4** Illustrate procedures and formats for different types of business documents

Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it, and above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light.

The preceding quote from newspaper legend Joseph Pulitzer, the father of writing's famous Pulitzer Prize, sums up the essence of good and powerful writing in one thirty-four-word statement. It's one of the great writing quotes of all time and focuses on what have often been called the

"ABC's of writing" (accuracy, brevity, and clarity). When Pulitzer took over the struggling *New York World* in 1883, the world was a vastly different place.⁵ He most likely couldn't have envisioned today's digital media and our ever-increasing reliance on technology to assist us in our writing. However, the value of his statement, and the value of good clear writing, has never changed. In today's world of 140-character Twitter posts and text messages full of abbreviations, it remains extremely important to focus on