

## *Influencing Your Audience*

*Crafting Messages that Motivate People to Support Your Ideas*

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***Influencing Your Audience***  
***Crafting Messages that Motivate People to Say Yes***

**I. What is persuasion**

- An overview

**II. Where to begin**

- Study your audience. You need to know what you are up against.

Beliefs, attitudes, and values

- Have a strategy

**III. Characteristics of the sender that affect persuasion**

- Is the writer/speaker credible?
  - Why credibility is important

Characteristics of the sender that affect persuasion (continued)

- Two criteria an audience will use to determine credibility:
  
- What you can do if you are not viewed as credible
  
- Is the writer/speaker likeable?

IV. Message factors that affect persuasion

- Use an appropriate structure
  - A) The **deductive** pattern (when readers are supportive or neutral)
    - Open with your main point, conclusion, or recommendation
    - Explain why and give benefits
    - Present costs and details about how to proceed
    - Rebut opposing points of view

Principal of inoculation -

Message factors that affect persuasion (continued)

B) The “**sequential motivation**” pattern

- Get attention.
- Explain the need or problem.
- Provide a way to meet the need or solve the problem.
- Help readers to visualize the benefits, thus strengthening their desire to embrace your idea.
- Urge the audience to act.

A simpler version of the sequential motivation format

Express the impact of the problem  
Explain the cause of the problem or the barrier to solving it  
Detail your solution  
Discuss the advantages of changing

C) The **indirect** approach for negative messages

- Open with something positive or neutral.
- Bring in the bad news.
- Close with something positive or neutral.

Message factors that affect persuasion (continued)

- Starting the message

A) When the audience is supportive or neutral

If it is a routine message, capture the highlights in a summary paragraph at the beginning. It should contain the two or three most important pieces of information about the message.

If you are advocating a position, preview your conclusion and the key points you will cover.

B) When the audience is resistant or skeptical

*Open with something the reader already agrees with:*

“Nurses and lawyers and accountants all have to be recertified, and we all agree that’s important because they need to keep their skills sharp. Yet, when it comes to writing, people assume that what they learned 20 years ago is enough to get through their careers.”

- Holding attention throughout the message

- Present your ideas in a logical sequence
- Use concrete words to help the reader visualize.
- Provide specific details to bolster your position.

Holding attention throughout the message (continued)

- Present your position in a context that the reader can relate to.
  
- Explain the impact in relation to something that the reader values.
  
- Cite credible sources; mentioning them can influence your position.
  
- Watch your tone!
  
- Tighten your writing. Excess verbiage will smother your message.

A) Use the direct, lean sentence structure.

She attended the conference. The event was held at the Marriot in Oakland.

B) Remove words that add nothing to the meaning of the sentence.

C) Stay focused on your core idea. Remove peripheral chatter.



*original*

To:  
From:  
Date:  
Subject:

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Kate,

At the conference last week, I raised the issue of longer time for corporate review of research reports. Given that you are making changes in your department, I thought you might want to take a look at this issue.

Your company typically provides 48 hours for us to review the report, and the people who review it are senior people. But senior people have day jobs. They travel, they're in long meetings with customers, and they have to deal with unexpected problems. When I have to barge into an executive's office on short notice waving your report, and he or she has to drop everything to review it, they resent the fire drill and it hurts our image in the communications department. If your report is negative, executives really freak out and we are scrambling to call analysts before the report hits the Internet. All this is messy, and I don't see a great business reason for you people to behave this way.

My recommendation is a 3-to-4 business day turnaround. The two-day review puts a gun to our head and causes too much resentment. I like META's policy of five days, but AMR gives us three to four ...

# # #

*revised*

Kate,

Having a strong business relationship is important to both our companies, so I hope you will consider an idea to create an ongoing useful dialogue. I want to ensure that our executives continue to provide the valuable business insight that your researchers need.

### **How you can help**

Please consider extending the time allowed for reviewing research notes from 48 hours to three to five business days. This would allow us to provide a thoughtful, measured response. We could help our executives to accept the negative news, and we could prepare to react when the report appears on your Web site and people begin to call us.

### **What this means to you**

Extending the review time would not cost your company anything and would foster considerable goodwill among corporate clients such as us. It also would put you in the company of your counterparts: META allows five days, AMR gives us three to four days, and Forrester and Giga allow two to four business days.