



Leadership Topics The Study of Persuasion & Communication

The study of persuasion is not a product of our modern consumer society. In Ancient Greece, over 2000 years ago, Aristotle suggested 3 possible means of persuasion that might underpin any persuasive message:

One: Logical proof of the argument - **Logos**

Two: Emotional proof of the argument - **Pathos**

Three: Ethical proof - **Ethos**

Program High Level Learning Objectives

1. Logical Proof – intended to appeal to a listener's sense of reasoning. There are 4 dominant types in our thinking process: example, signs, cause, analogy

- Reasoning from Example – statistics, survey evidence etc demonstrate the validity of a proposal and/or establish authority
- Reasoning from Signs – this means via your behaviour – showing interest in your listeners, engaging, empathising
- Reasoning from Cause – identify the results of an action or a problem & argue relating to effect. If the result is the listener modifies a behaviour or takes specific action (cause), the problem (effect) will diminish or be solved
- Reasoning from Analogy – this is to persuade the listener by providing specific names of people or groups whose good results can be identified by the listener eg: info about customer satisfaction from a respected competitor

2. Emotional Proof – to capture the persuasive edge you need to understand what motivates your audience & give this emphasis. Motivation = an attempt to satisfy wants, desires, needs, drives. Here is Maslow's take on a list of values:

1. Honesty – moral integrity/human virtues
2. Personal freedom – security
3. Patriotism – national progress etc
4. Work – personal satisfaction from a work ethic
5. Efficiency & pragmatism
6. Democracy
7. Helping others
8. Achievement – job satisfaction, self-actualisation
9. Material comfort – leisure
10. Individualism – non-conformity
11. Economic security
12. Higher motivations – spiritual pursuits

continued

3. Ethical Proof – credibility is critical in a persuasive presentation. Perceived trustworthiness, perceived competence, and perceived conviction are the focus here. Perceptions are realities (even though these may change).

- Establishing common ground between the speaker and audience is one of the best ways to create and build trust, It requires establishing a rapprochement with your audience in terms of values, attitudes, experience, and so on...
- Make the link with the whole audience not just a segment
- Personal authenticity is critical – consistency of message – verbal and non-verbal
- A high level of credibility will result in a 'positive bias' and may permit a 'one-sided argument' approach. Sources of credibility are status, goodwill, expertise, fairness, transparent integrity, image (identification)

Note

Propaganda and Rhetoric

The process of persuasion can be seen as an interactive one in which the recipient sees the fulfilment of a need or a desire if the persuasive message is accepted – *both parties have their need fulfilled*. People will respond to persuasion that promises to help them in some way by satisfying a want or a need. The persuader is empathetic but at the same time a reciprocal dependency emerges between the speaker and the audience.

In the case of the propagandist, there is a desire to create an inactive dependency instead of an interactive situation. Rhetoric does/should not include propaganda – it is a contradiction. Classical rhetoric always emphasised adhering to the truth in revealing the true intent of the communicator and a sincere concern for the welfare of the audience. Propagandists are seen as misusing rhetorical techniques for 'dishonest' ends.

Learn more:

For information about Equilearn' s Conversation around Persuasion Tools,

email info@equilearn.org or call 44 207 736 7878