CHAPTER 13: HOW TO BE PERSUASIVE
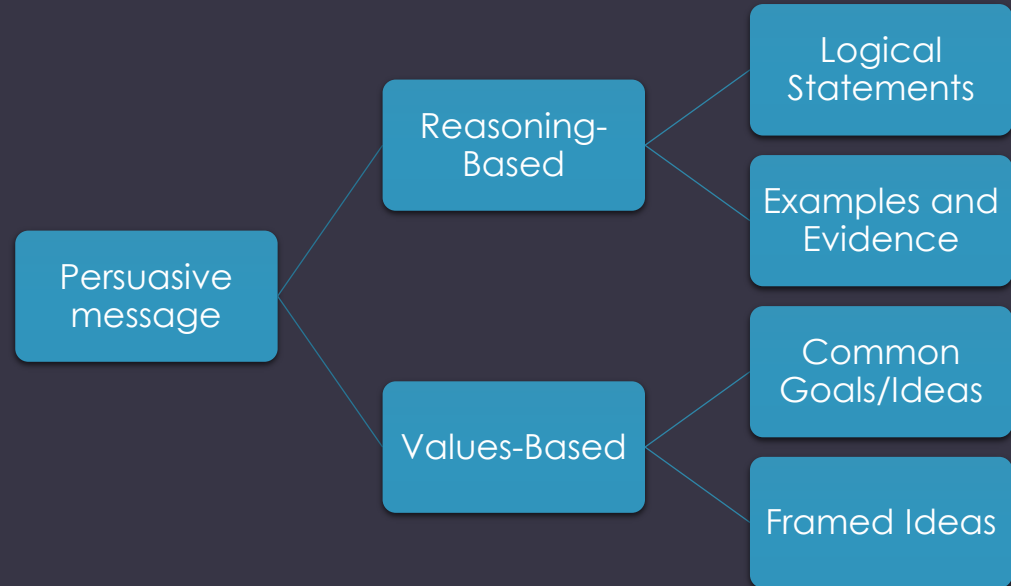
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Outline

- 13.1: Use reasoning to support your views with logic, examples, and evidence

- 13.2: Use values to appeal to common goals and ideals while using language that is familiar to your readers

- 13.3: Persuade people to say yes to your ideas

- 13.4: Understand how persuasion works in high-context cultures

Introduction to Persuasion Strategy

- Persuasion is not only about changing other people's minds, but also gives people a good reason to do things they might already want to do

- All forms of scientific and technical communication are persuasive in some way

- The best strategy is a blend of blend of reasoning and values based persuasion

Persuasive message → Reasoning-Based → Logical Statements
Persuasive message → Reasoning-Based → Examples and Evidence
Persuasive message → Values-Based → Common Goals/Ideas
Persuasive message → Values-Based → Framed Ideas

13.1: Reasoning with Logic

- Logically constructed statements appeal to your readers' common sense of beliefs, and they build complex ideas from simpler facts

1. **IF…THEN**
   - Use this statement if you want to persuade your readers by demonstrating that something they already believe leads logically to something else they should accept

2. **EITHER…OR**
   - Use this statement if you want to offer readers a choice between two paths
   - This choice can be risky, so you must make the correct path obvious to your readers if you wish for them to go in a particular direction.

3. **CAUSE AND EFFECT**
   - Use this statement if you want to demonstrate to your readers how specific causes lead to specific effects or trends

4. **COSTS AND BENEFITS**
   - Use this statement if you want to show the readers that the benefits outweigh the costs

5. **BETTER AND WORSE**
   - Use this statement to show that the ideas you present are better than the alternatives or to explain the pros and cons

13.1: Reasoning with Examples and Evidence

- Using real or realistic statements and support for your claims

- **EXAMPLES**
  - Use when you want to clarify and support a complex idea while making it seem more realistic to readers
  - For example, X happened, which is similar to what we are experiencing now"

- **EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS**
  - "I have seen/experienced X before, so I know Y is likely true."

- **FACTS AND DATA**
  - These are some of the strongest forms of evidence because people generally trust observed facts and numbers that are empirically proven and generated.

- **QUOTES FROM EXPERTS**
  - Use as evidence to back up claims

13.2: Appealing to Common Goals and Ideals

- People prefer to say yes to someone who they believe have the same values and ideals they do

- Look at the profile you developed about your readers to determine shared:

  - **GOALS**

    - Discuss your readers' goals with them and you can show readers in your document how your product or services will help them reach those goals

  - **NEEDS**

    - Basic requirements for survival such as <u>sterilizing equipment in the operating room with alcohol</u>

  - **SHARED VALUES**

    - These values such as <u>high quality service </u>can be found by looking on your client's corporate website.

  - **ATTITUDES**

    - Can determine whether your message is persuasive or not

    - Words alone will rarely change someone's attitude, but you can show that you empathize with your readers' point of view

13.2: Framing issues from the Readers' Perspective

- <u>Frames</u>: use of words, phrases, and themes that reflect your reader's point of view and values

- **FRAMING**
  - Look closely at the profile you developed for your readers and locate the one or two words or phrases that best characterize your readers' perspective on the issue.
  - Use concept mapping to develop a frame around that concept.
  - The frame will help you choose content and phrasing that support or reinforce the readers' point of view.

- **REFRAMING**
  - Use when a reader may not see an issue in a way that is compatible with your or your company's views.
  - Look deeper into the profile of your readers to find a value you both share.

13.3: Getting Someone To Say Yes

- Noah Goldstein and Steve Martin researchers who complied persuasive strategies into a book called *Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive*
    1. DECREASE THE NUMBER OF OPTIONS
        - Give a few options, more you give could cause them to hesitate
    2. TELL PEOPLE THEIR PRIOR BLIEFS WERE CORRECT
        - Under the old conditions, but new conditions call for them to think and act differently than before
    3. CREATE AN IMPRESSION OF SCARCITY
        - For example: the product or service will be available in limited amounts for only a short time
    4. ASK THEM TO HELP
        - In figuring out how to solve the problem, readers will respond in a more positive way.
    5. LABEL THE READERS AS MEMBERS OF A SPECIFIC GROUP

13.3: Getting Someone To Say Yes

6. USE "*YOU*" TO REFER TO READERS
   - You is preferred by Western Cultures, but Eastern cultures more favorably respond to a product that is best for all.
7. USE THE WORD "*BECAUSE*" TO MAKE YOUR ARGUMENTS SOUND RATIONAL
8. ADMIT YOU WERE WRONG (IF YOU WERE)
   - Taking responsibility will build trust, shows you are working towards improvement
9. RHYME PHRASES TO MAKE THEM MORE CONVINCING
   - "An apple a day keeps the doctor away"
10. FACE TIME BEATS EMAIL

13.4 Persuasion in High-Context Cultures

- Persuasion is especially challenging in high-context cultures because the cultures usually put more emphasis on the community rather than on individuals

- High-context cultures include: Asia, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa

- As a technical communicator, one must research how people from the target cultures operate

13.4 Persuasion in High-Context Cultures Continued

- Guidelines

1. Develop long-term relationships
   - You may to invest years of effort to build a relationship
2. Use intermediaries to build relationships
3. Rely on facts and reasoning
   - Note that attempts to persuade directly are often viewed negatively
4. Avoid arguing strongly for or against
   - If you disagree with someone, restate the acts of your ideas and use reasoning to explain them.
5. Strive to reach consensus
   - Present your ideas as a win-win for both sides

6. Speak collectively, not individually
   - Use "we or us" rather than "I or me"
7. Be patient and wait for the "point"
   - Approach complex issues holistically
8. Remember that "no" is rarely used
   - A direct refusal can be considered an insult
9. Don't be informal
   - Even if you know someone well, you should address the person by title and demonstrate respect for his or her position
10. Defer to hierarchy
11. Minimize emotions

Discussion Questions

1. Over the course of the semester a lot of our discussion has been on technical communication and a reader centered approach. In what ways do you think a reader centered approach is applicable in regards to persuasion?

2. In what ways can you blend reasoning and values based persuasion and incorporate it into Project 2?