Audience Analysis

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Synopsis

- Categories of Audience

- What is Audience Analysis?

- Three ways to analysis audience

- Remember that you are speaking to individuals

Categories of Audience

- A : Analysis
- U : Understanding
- D : Demographics
- I : Interest
- E : Environment
- N : Needs
- C : Customization
- E : Expectations

- Analysis - Who are they? How many will be there?

- Understanding - What is their knowledge of the subject?

- Demographics - What is their age, sex, educational background?

- Interest - Why are they there? Who asked them to be there?

- Environment - Where will I stand? Can they all see & hear me?

- Needs - What are their needs? What are your needs as the speaker?

- Customized - What specific needs do you need to address?

- Expectations - What do they expect to learn or hear from you?

What is Audience Analysis?

Audience analysis is the process of learning,

- who your audience is,
- what they are thinking,
- how you can best reach them.

- Thoughtful audience analysis is one of the best habits you can develop as a speaker

Three ways to analysis audience

☐ Audience analysis studies your audience along three primary dimensions

1. Demographic Analysis : Who is in your audience? What are their individual and group characteristics?

2. Psychological Analysis : What does your audience know? What do they believe? What do they think about your topic?

3. Contextual Analysis : When and where are you presenting? Why is this audience listening to you?

1. Demographic Audience Analysis

□ The aim of demographic audience analysis is to discover who you are speaking to,

➢ Depending on your topic and message, some of the following questions will be relevant and some will not:

◆ How old are they?

A talk about investment options would be very different if you are speaking with teenagers versus a group nearing retirement.

◆ Men? Women? Mixed?

A talk about nutrition, fitness, or fashion may depend on the gender of your audience.

◆ What is their profession?

Imagine talking about a scientific discovery with an audience of engineers versus accountants.

◆ **What is their religion?**

A talk about moral issues may depend heavily on the religion of your audience members.

◆ **What is their educational level?**

Imagine the difference speaking to high school students versus lawyers.

◆ **What is their personality type?**

Introverts and extroverts have different preferences that may impact your seminar approach.

◆ **Are they your peers?**

e.g. co-workers or classmates

◆ **Are they your superiors or subordinates?**

Either could be good or bad…

◆ Is the audience homogeneous or heterogeneous?

It usually makes your life easier if your audience is fairly homogeneous in certain ways. For example, you can be far more technical if you are talking to a room full of engineers. Just be careful not to assume your audience members are identical — they are not.

◆ What is the size of the audience?

Larger audiences dictate many presentation differences compared to smaller audiences. In addition, larger audiences will tend to be more heterogeneous, and so you can draw fewer conclusions about them.

2. Psychological Audience Analysis

☐ The aim of psychological audience analysis is to discover what your audience may be thinking before and during your presentation.

☐ Psychological analysis covers both the knowledge (or lack of knowledge) and the beliefs of your audience.

Audience Knowledge

◆ What do they know about your topic? What don't they know?
These are critical questions to determine the "level" at which you target your presentation.

◆ What do they want to know? What do they need to know?
It's critical that you satisfy their expectations. Otherwise, your presentation will be seen as a failure for them.

◆ What specialized terminology are they familiar with?
Using acronyms and technical terms is okay in a presentation, but only if your audience recognizes them (or you take the time to define them).

◆ What concepts, processes, or tools are they familiar with?
Like terminology, you can draw upon these concepts, processes, and tools as you build your presentation. Consider them building blocks that are already in place before you begin.

Audience Beliefs

◆ Are they neutral, or are they predisposed to agree with or oppose your message?

Audiences of the three different types require three totally different presentations.

◆ What are the most important values to the audience? (Or, what are the values of their organization?)

It's important to know what they value as these are often the best starting points upon which you can build your arguments.

◆ What problems do they have?

If your presentation aims to offer them a solution, it surely helps if they agree with you that the problem exists in the first place!

3. Contextual Audience Analysis

☐ The aim of contextual audience analysis is to discover how the speaking event itself may influence your audience's state of mind.

☐ In some ways, this analysis takes who they are (demographic) and what they believe (psychological), and pins it to a certain time and place where you'll be speaking.

➤ Consider the following questions:

◆ Is their attendance voluntary or mandatory?
In most cases, audience members who are attending voluntarily are much more open-minded, more enthusiastic, and more motivated to hear what you have to say. On the other hand, mandatory attendees may require extra effort on your part to motivate.

◆ What are people wearing?
Not only will this dictate how you may want to dress, but it may also guide you in the level of formality you should maintain.

◆ What time of day are you speaking?
Before/during/after a meal? Early/late in the day? Timing will influence your audience's state of mind.

Remember that you are speaking to individuals

➢ In rare circumstances, you are able to meet privately with each audience member before your presentation and learn about them and their expectations. However, this is rarely practical. So, you are usually required to infer a great deal from your audience analysis instead.

➢ However, you don't talk to amorphous blobs known as audiences. You talk to individual people, and no two people in your audience are identical. While the individuals in your audience may be similar in many ways, there will always be a range of characteristics: a range of knowledge levels, a range of beliefs, a range of expectations, etc. Even the best audience analysis will have a degree of uncertainty.