

Pluralsight : Understanding your audience

1. Communicating better because you understand the audience

We all have multiple audiences; boss, team, company, prospects, customers, peers, ...
By understanding your audience you will communicate better.

If you don't know who you are talking to, you aren't really talking to anyone.

When you try to make your message fit everyone, it fits no one.

Three parts of effective communication:

⇒ Intent

- ↳ Why am I communicating?
- What outcome do I want?
- Am I training, educating, persuading, selling? Increasing brand awareness?

Ex: presentation of a list of things. Depending on the audience you give different informat'. Rather than a long list of everything, give a short list of the most important things.

⇒ Medium

- ↳ Vehicle that delivers intent to audience

- Written: e-mails, articles, blog posts, white papers, executive briefings, case studies,...
- Verbal: Presentations (long), Radio, Podcasts, Informal meetings (short), one-on-ones,...
- Visual: Flyer, Powerpoint, App interface,...

The medium depends on the message and intent.

Some mediums are more adapted to certain things:
facts, data, instructions, ...

ex: Inspirational speech => physical meeting with eye contact, no visual.

=> Audience

↳ Who you communicate to.

What is your audience:

By explicitly defining your audience to avoid making generalizations.

↳ Can be counterproductive.

You must take in consideration different things about your audience. Are they willing or forced to listen to you?

↳ ex: Someone paid to listen to you.

Someone attends a meeting talking about the cancellation of a project they worked hard on.

Factors that influence the audience:

- Number of people → Motivation
- State of mind → Qualifications

Your audience is human !

↳ Something personal in their life can have an impact on them at a certain moment.

Invest time to get to know what is happening in their world.

The more you understand your audience and their circumstances, the better you can adjust your message and timing.

The results of understanding your audience :

Understanding people and their circumstances change your perspective.

The unknown becoming known, wrong assumptions are eliminated.

By understanding your audience you change from "Talking at your audience and focusing on saying your message.", to

"Talking with your audience and focusing on the message they receive.".

• Talking at :

↳ feels impersonal and discouraging.

Discredits the communicator : loyalty and affinity decreases.

The person listening feels used.

• Talking to :

↳ Message comes across well.

The listener wants to hear more.

His trust is increased, he pays attention, he endorses you, he will make decisions.

Defining your audience:

An audience definition that is too loose (too broad) gives too much weight to assumptions.

You need to talk to your audience:

↳ Challenges, situations, ...

Understand them and know why they are unique 

When we don't define an audience, we risk losing an audience we thought we were talking to.

Describe the messenger:

In most cases it is you.

However you need to understand how you are perceived by your audience. Who are you to them?

Who you are to people depends on your status 
(employee, manager, producer) and what your message is (asking for a discount → you have no power).

Understand the dynamics of who you are so you can leverage that without abusing your position.

2. Understanding communication from marketing's perspective.

Audience definite }
Understand audience } very important for marketers

They are masters in that domain.

Demographics:

- ↳ One of the ways to define your audience.
- Not the best way but has been used for a long time.



Information about :

- ↳ Age, race, gender, ethnicity, marital status, income, education level, employment.

These are topics we avoid today because people can think we discriminate (ex: job interview).



The "good thing" about demographics :

- ↳ Categorize people and make assumptions with the data collected.
- ↗ ⇒ also the "bad thing"

Today demographics is not the only thing to consider.

You shouldn't allow it to create stereotypes that will blind you.

Psychographics:

- ↳ Study of : personnalities, values, attitudes, interests, lifestyles, opinions, beliefs, ...

⇒ Helps understand why you are part of a certain audience.

Helps create an audience definition based on current and past behaviors, decisions and thinking.

Psychographic questions:

↳ based on behaviors, decisions and preferences.

Not demographic data.

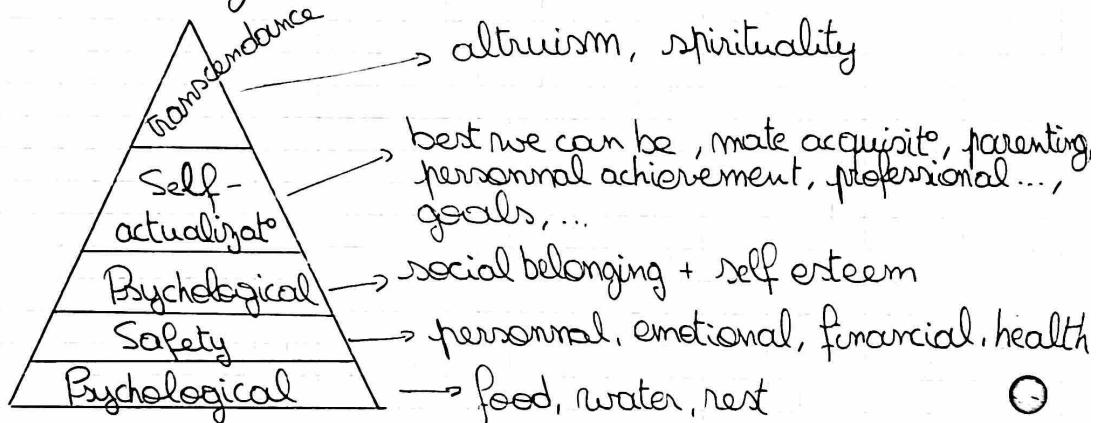
Psychographics \Rightarrow no more assumptions

Marlow's hierarchy of needs:

↳ Pyramid shaped.

The lower parts are the most important.

Without having fulfilled one we can not start thinking about the next one.



Understanding where your audience is in this hierarchy can help on what and how to communicate.

Cognitive biases:

↳ "mistake in reasoning, ... often occurring as a result of holding onto a personal preference / belief regardless of contrary information!"

ex: → Preferring following "the herd". Rather follow everyone's idea than thinking on your own.

→ Politically correct ideas. *

* Trying to not offend someone and choosing something else.

Your message:

=> Message requirements

↳ stay on topic, communicate everything, avoid distract.

=> Clarity

=> Medium

You need to think about what the audience wants for information or what will be usefull to them.

↳ describe the problem, the idea, the steps, what it needs and what it will cost.



⚠ Think about the best medium, the type of audience, ...

The context of culture:

Depending of the culture of your audience, some things can be well received or not.

3. How to practice effective communication

Creating audience profiles:



Rather have too much information than not enough.

Some can appear irrelevant but be relevant later.

Creating audience profiles helps you understand what the different people are looking for.

↳ What features, will they arrive well informed to meetings, are they very demanding, do they have responsibilities, ...

You need to adapt but don't let one person, one interaction, define an entire audience.

Performing message analysis:

- ↳ Analyse how well your message will resonate with your audience.
- ⇒ Too much/not enough information?
- ⇒ Data too complex/too simple?
- ⇒ Appropriate visuals?
- ⇒ ...

You need to appeal to everyone in the audience (the best way you can). ⇒ include every party.

Focusing on one audience ⇒ really bad



Connect the message to your audience:

Put yourself in the mind of your audience (through data you collected) and consider the best ways to have your message connect.

Ask yourself what are the concerns? How can they connect?

Think about the most important informations.

Share impactful stories. Express the urgency...



→ Prioritize talking points to not run out of time or express the wrong ideas.

Emotions in communications:

Emotions, even positives, can distract from your message.

Showing your emotions in the wrong way, at the wrong time can get you the wrong reaction.

You should have a list of emotional triggers before entering a reunion. Predict the possibilities.

During a meeting you need to focus on the objective and try not to show emotions that could compromise the negotiations.

You also need to think about the emotions your audience will have. Are they the emotions you wanted?

Can you avoid certain negative emotions?

Scare tactics:

↳ Create fear not in a mean way but to prove a point in your communication.

ex: "You didn't realize but I could hack in the network through "this" security breach."

You want the audience to have the right emotions.

Sometimes emotions are more important than the information. You want people to remember the feeling/emotions they had.



4. Speaking through filters to get your message across clearly

Filtering on expectations:

Your audience has expectations about your communication. If your communication doesn't match their expectations they can be distracted or angry.

↳ ex: conference addressing another subject than what was announced.

Your audience will build expectations based on experiences or what they have heard about you. ○

The positive expectations your audience has about you helps you convince them with less effort.

↳ Gaining your audience's trust is important.

Filtering on points of reference:

We all have points of reference that impact the way we deliver/receive information. ○

↳ ex: A boss thinking a certain technology ~~is~~ firm is always bad.

It can impact you and your audience. You should try to find what your audience considers taboo.

These points of reference can come from:

→ authority figures: parents, teachers, ...

→ media: conservative, liberal, ...

→ ...

Filtering on experiences:

Past experiences can impact the way people communicate or receive information.

It is therefore important you try to deliver a good experience to your audience.

You also should try to find out more about the past experiences your audience had. That way you can address those filters.

Asking for information about past experiences is not a bad thing. It can appear very forwarding but most of the time it goes well.

