



# **Business Communication (HS-218)**

*Week 9 (Recorded Lecture Part 2)*

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# Audience Analysis

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# What Do I Need To Know About My Audience?

- In general, you need to use **empathy** and critical-thinking tools. Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes, to feel with that person. Empathy requires being audience-centred because the audience is not just like you.
- **Critical thinking** involves gathering as much information as you can about someone or something, and then making decisions based on that information. You need to use your research and your knowledge about people and about organizations to predict likely responses.
- Analyzing Individuals and Members of Groups by :
  - **Demographic Profile**
  - **Psychographic Profile**

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# Demographic Profile

- Demographic characteristics can be objectively quantified, or measured, and include age, gender, religion, education level, income, location, and so on.
- Businesses and governments use a variety of demographic data to forecast people's behaviours, and to design their strategies accordingly.
- Sometimes demographic information is irrelevant; sometimes it's important. Does age matter?
- Almost always, since people's perspectives and priorities change as they grow older.

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# Psychographic Profile

- Understanding and adapting to your primary audience's personality can also help make your message more effective.
- Personality and learning style assessment instruments can provide you with useful insights into your own and others' behaviours.
- A popular assessment tool, the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**, uses four dimensions to identify personality preferences:
  - 1. **Introvert–extrovert**: The source of one's energy. Introverts get their energy from within; extroverts are energized by interacting with other people.
  - 2. **Sensing–intuitive**: How someone gathers information. Sensing types gather information systematically through their senses. Intuitive types see relationships among ideas.
  - 3. **Thinking–feeling**: How someone makes decisions. Thinking types use objective logic to reach decisions. Feeling types make decisions that “feel right.”
  - 4. **Judging–perceiving**: The degree of certainty someone needs. Judging types like organization, and prefer to finish one task before starting another. Perceptive types like possibilities, like to keep their options open, and may interrupt their work on one task to start another.

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# Psychographic Profile

- **Psychographic characteristics** are **qualitative** rather than quantitative and include values, beliefs, goals, and lifestyles.
- Knowing what your audience finds important allows you to organize information in a way that seems natural to your audience, and to choose appeals that audience members will find persuasive.
- **Past Behaviour** Experts in human behaviour believe that we can analyze and predict people's future actions based on their past behaviours: the more recent the behaviour, the more accurate the prediction.
- On this premise, employers are using **behavioural-based interviews** ("Tell me about a situation in which you ran into conflict. What happened and how did you deal with it?") to assess a candidate's potential.

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# What Do I Need To Know About My Audience?

Since audience analysis is central to the success of your message, you'll need to consider the following pertinent information about your audience:

- Their knowledge about your topic (**Prior Knowledge**)
- Their **demographic factors**, such as age, gender, education, income, class, marital status, number of children, home ownership, location
- Their **personality**
- Their **attitudes, values**, and beliefs
- Their **past behaviour**

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# Prior Knowledge

- Even people in your own organization won't share all your knowledge, for e.g. technical language.
- Most of the time, you won't know exactly what your audience knows. Moreover, even if you've told readers before, they might not remember the old information when they read the new message. In any case, avoid mind-numbing details.
- If, however, you want to remind readers of relevant facts tactfully,
  - Preface statements with "As you know," "As you may know," "As we've discussed," or a similar phrase.
  - Always spell out acronyms the first time you use them: "Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)."
  - Provide brief definitions in the text: "the principal (the money you have invested)."

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# Analyzing Members of a Group

- Audience reaction is also strongly influenced by the perceptions and expectations of the groups to which they belong.
- These groups are personal, social, religious, political, and class associations. These groups are known as **discourse communities** because their members create their affiliation, rules, and norms through accepted verbal and non-verbal symbols (discourse).
- These groups **include family, peers, professional associations, clubs,** and the workplace—all communities with which members of your audience identify. Members communicate through symbols (language, non-verbals) that may or may not be exclusive to their group, but which identify them as members of that group.
  - For example, the uniform of a sports team symbolizes association, and the team's name reflects the culture and values members hold.

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# Analyzing Discourse Communities In An Organization

- **Consider your discourse communities:** perhaps you wear jeans to signify your membership in the student community; your hairstyle or piercing indicates your membership in a subculture; your iPod holds music that **reflects your affiliation to another group**. When you go for a job interview, you might get a haircut and put on more formal clothes to reflect the norms of the organization's discourse community that you want to join.
- Therefore, **a discourse community** is a group of people who **share assumptions** about their **particular culture and values**:
  - what to wear; how to behave; what topics to discuss and how to discuss them; what channels, formats, and styles to use; and what constitutes evidence.
  - Each person is part of several discourse communities, which may or may not overlap.

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# Analyzing Discourse Communities In An Organization

- When analyzing an organization's discourse community, consider both **non-verbal and verbal clues**:
  - What does the physical environment say about who and what are valued?
  - What departments and services are front and centre? Where is the reception area located? What messages do the decor and furnishings send? How are visitors welcomed? Is the company mission statement prominent? What does the office space layout indicate about the organization's values?
  - Where are the library, training rooms, gymnasium, and cafeteria located?
  - How well are they resourced?
  - Where do the managers work? Do bosses dress differently from other employees?
  - How are employees treated? How are new hires oriented? How is employee performance recognized? What's featured in the company newsletter? How do people in the organization get important information?
  - How do people in the organization communicate? What channels, formats, and styles are preferred for communication?
  - What do people talk about? What is not discussed?
  - What kind of and how much evidence is needed to be convincing?

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# Analyzing Discourse Communities in An Organization

- An **organization's culture** is expressed through its **values, attitudes, and philosophies**. Once established, organizational or corporate culture can shape members' attitudes and behaviours, and become very difficult to change.
- Organizational or **corporate culture** reveals itself verbally in the organization's myths, stories, and heroes, and non-verbally in the allocation of space, money, and power.
- **Two companies in the same business may express very different cultures**. Their company websites can offer some clues about what those cultures value, and how they want to project their brand.
  - Royal Bank's standing as Canada's oldest bank is reflected in its corporate website colours: conservative dark blue and gold. TD Canada Trust's green and white site—implying a fresh approach—offers photos of young, happy people, apparently delighted by the products and services the bank provides.

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# How Do I Use Audience Analysis?

- Use audience analysis to **plan strategy, organization, style, document design, and visuals.**
- **Strategy:**
  - Choose appeals and reader benefits that work for the specific audience (Module 11).
  - Use details and language that reflect your knowledge of, and respect for the specific audience, the organizational culture, and the discourse community.
  - Make it easy for the audience to respond positively.
  - Include only necessary information.
  - Anticipate and overcome objections

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# How Do I Use Audience Analysis?

- **Organization:**

- Analyze your audience's reaction to the meaning of the message.
- When your message is positive, you can make your point right away.
- However, many business messages cause negative reader reaction: messages demanding payment, attempting to sell a product or service, or informing readers of a rate increase or of changes that may inconvenience them.
- When you must persuade a reluctant reader, and when your audience would see the message negatively, organize the message to break the news gradually.
- Anticipate and meet the audience's expectations of format: make the organizational pattern clear to the audience.

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# How Do I Use Audience Analysis?

- **Style:**
  - most business audiences today expect messages that are short and clear.
  - Strive for clarity and accessibility: use simple words, a mixture of sentence lengths.
  - Use natural, conversational, personable, tactful language: avoid negative, defensive, arrogant, and “red-flag” words—unfortunately, fundamentalist, crazy, incompetent, dishonest—that may generate a negative reaction.
  - Use the language that appeals to your audience.

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# How Do I Use Audience Analysis?

- **Document Design:**
  - Use headings, bulleted lists, and a mix of paragraph lengths to create white space.
  - Choose the format, footnotes, and visuals expected by the organizational culture or the discourse community.
- **Photographs and Visuals:**
  - Carefully consider the difference between cartoons and photos of “high art.” Photos and visuals can make a document look more informal or more formal.
  - Use bias-free photographs. Unintentional cultural, gender, religious, and economic assumptions can offend readers and cost you business.
  - Choose photographs and illustrations that project positive cultural meanings for your audience. Middle Eastern readers, for example, find pictures of bare-legged and bare-armed women offensive and may object to pictures of clean-shaven men.
  - Do your research and audience analysis: some cultures (e.g., France and Japan) use evocative photographs that bear little direct relationship to the text. North American audiences expect photos to relate to the text.

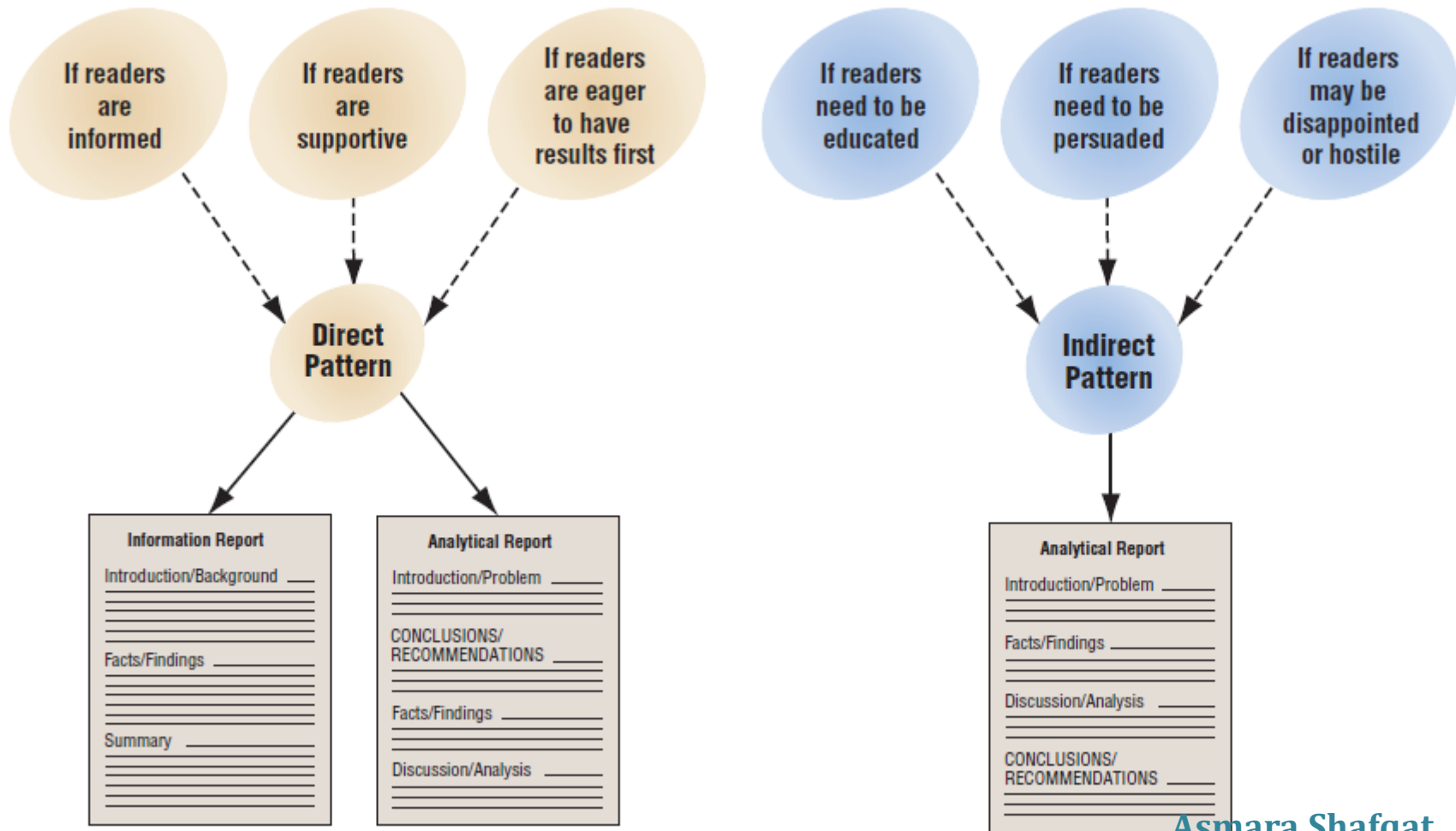
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**FIGURE 9.1** Audience Analysis and Report Organization



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# Writing with a “YOU” Attitude

- ▶ A “you” attitude focuses on the reader, NOT the writer
- ▶ Consider word choice
  - Select words that focus on reader
  - Talk about “you” not “me”

Your messages should have more “you” words than “I” or “Me” words

# How Do I Use Audience Analysis?

- Source:
  - McGraw and Hill
  - Module 2: Adapting Your Messages to Your Audience

# Any Questions?



**If you have any questions regarding this Part of Recorded Lecture, you can ask in the live session at your scheduled live session timings.**

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**Thank you**