

Advanced Persuasive Communication Techniques

S8 Graduation
Personal Development
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Introduction

During my international study at Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand, I followed a subject called Communication Fundamentals. During these lessons, I learned the basics of Persuasive Communication Techniques. These techniques are a nifty set of tools that can be used to convince someone about your perspective. Examples are around us in everyday life. People and businesses are trying to influence your opinion in newspapers, email campaigns, advertisements and much more.

Persuasive communication techniques are essentially a life requisite as it can be a very powerful skill to have when you're trying to convince someone in any topic. This can be applied in everyday conversations, but also in presentations.

In this document, I'll continue where I left off on this topic in New Zealand and show how I applied these techniques during my internship.

Recap of the basics

At Otago Polytechnic, I only learned the basics of persuasive communication. I used a course on Nebula as a resource for this, but I only included the first couple of videos.

A document of my progress in persuasive communication at Otago Polytechnic can be found [here](#).

Persuasion in real life

As explained in the introduction, persuasive communication is around us in everyday life. From news articles to advertisements, but also just regular conversation. The typical news article is written by someone who establishes credibility by introducing himself as an expert on the topic. This is how you as a reader tend to trust the author. Then he introduces his opinion and starts defending his arguments by sourcing research findings. Often, the problem or topic is introduced alongside a story that explains it. This brings an emotional connection to the audience and helps to empathise with the problem. When the reader is so invested in the problem that he actually wants to fix it, the reader is given a bit of hope in the form of possible solutions. Now the reader is fully on board with the problem and tends to adopt the presented solutions more easily.

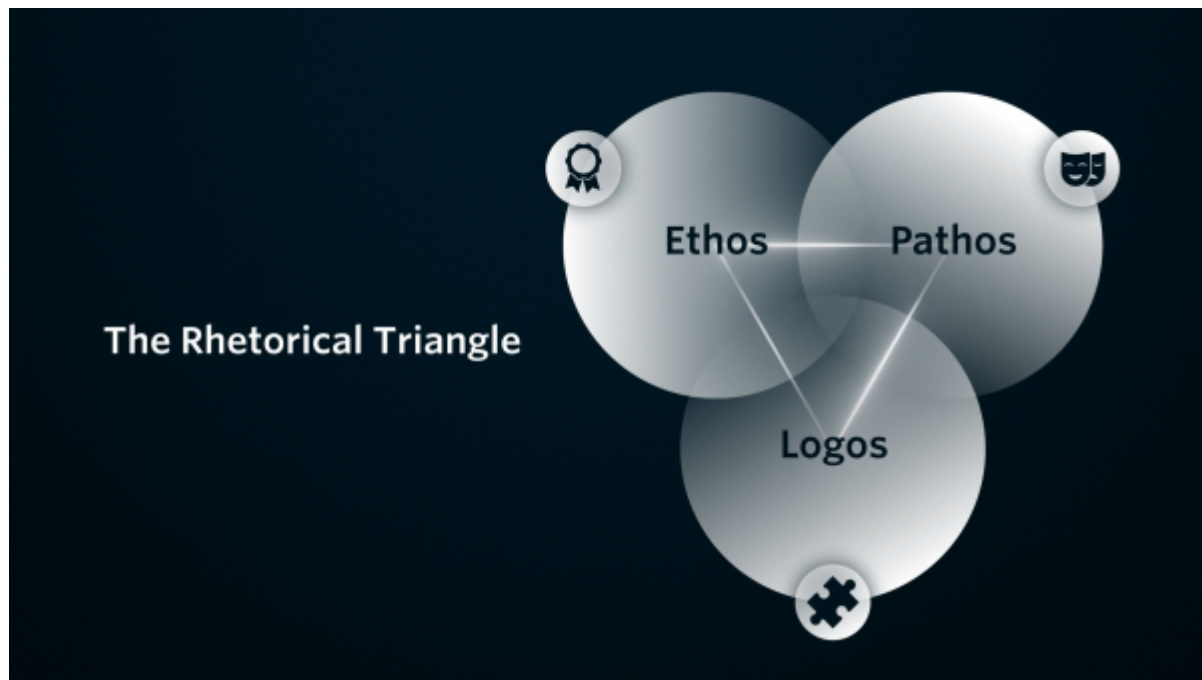
The basics of persuasion

Persuasion relies on something called the rhetorical triangle, made up of logic, character and emotion. This theory has been around since ancient Greek where philosopher Plato stated that every person has a soul that controls our behaviour. This soul consists out of the three parts of the rhetorical triangle and together they influence our behaviour. This theory is still around to this day.

Character involves the messenger of the argument as a person worth trusting. This primarily comes down to the expertise of the character, but it's also important that the character's language and word choice is right for the audience.

Logic should be the core of all arguments. However, these days information can be easily manipulated. Facts and statistics can be interpreted completely differently by someone by only changing the context. Graphs and infographics can be designed in such a way that the actual stats are amplified or reduced. That's why it's important to clearly display statistics and cite sources of facts.

Emotion plays with the audience's feelings to shift opinion. Sometimes logic on itself isn't powerful enough to result in a difference of behaviour or action, but emotion can sometimes make a difference. For example, most people who own a car know that climate change is bad, but still drive to work every day. That's why climate activist campaigns rely heavily on emotion in the hope people change their behaviour.



The Social Judgement Theory

The social judgement theory explains that your audience already has an opinion on the topic. This has an effect on how an audience can be influenced and how an individual receives an argument. Let's say you have a friend that's a real petrol head and loves fast, powerful cars. It's unlikely that your friend is going to hear out your arguments about why his next car should be an environmentally friendly Toyota Prius.

The theory consists of three possible options of what an individual can do with an argument. An individual can accept an argument right away, consider it, or reject it before you've even put the case together. This is also known as the latitudes of acceptance, non-commitment and rejection. Every argument used will be placed somewhere on this spectrum by the audience.

If an audience receives an argument in the latitude of acceptance, they agree with you, and it requires very little effort to convince them in your opinion. If the opposite happens, and the audience places an argument in the latitude of rejection, the differences between your arguments and the audience's views will increase. It's not impossible to persuade this group, but it takes a different

approach. It helps to look at their interests and come up with arguments that they value. The audience that places an argument in the latitudes of non-commitment can be persuaded with a well substantiated argument.

Adjusting your arguments according to the audience is of course only possible when you know your audience. Make assumptions about what they value or what their political views are, or maybe they've said something in the past about the topic.

Applying Persuasive Communication

Applying these techniques can be particularly useful when presenting for the return day and the graduation conference. I will use these techniques to construct well structured arguments on how I made decisions for my project and to increase the credibility of my work. This way, I hope to do a distinctly lucid presentation to shift the opinions of the jury and the audience according to my liking.

Summary

Persuasive Communication Techniques are a nifty set of skills to influence an audience on an opinion. By structuring a presentation according to the rhetorical triangle and taking the opinion of the audience in mind, I can increase the credibility of my work. This way, I hope to do a distinctly lucid presentation to shift the opinions of the jury and the audience according to my liking.

Learning Outcome Clarification

- Learning Outcome 5: Personal Leadership
- Learning Outcome 6: Targeted Interaction

Learning outcome 5 applies to this deliverable as I paid attention to my learning ability and am aware of what I want to learn for the role that I envision in the IT-landscape.

Learning outcome 6 applies for this deliverable as I communicated appropriately to achieve the desired impact. I want to persuade the audience and jury during my graduation session and I will apply advanced persuasive communication techniques to appropriately achieve this.