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## COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS FOR BUSINESS

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# 9.5 Persuasive Messages

Persuasive messages essentially move people to change their behaviors, opinions, or serve to reinforce existing ones. These messages can shift minds and move mountains through the various logical, emotional, temporal, and credibility appeals covered in [Chapter 3.4 Writing to Persuade](#), so to be persuasive, the content of such messages must be carefully constructed with reasoning and evidence. These persuasive messages often initiate organizational change and advancement, leading to new projects when responding to need and opportunity. Examples of persuasive messages include those that make requests of resistant readers, those that sell products or services, as well as those that change opinion—like the imperative for wearing masks during a pandemic. Please see **Figure 9.5.1** for an example of a simple persuasive invitation.

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Date: February 19, 2020

To: All employees

Cc:

Bcc:

From: Shasta Abenaki [sabenaki@solsticeyogastudios.com]

Subject: Training for Zoom Virtual Meetings

Hello everyone,

Solstice Yoga Studios is shifting its classes to online format, so knowing how to use Zoom software to advantage is key to our team's success as we adapt to the pandemic closures.

Zoom software is helping us to sustain our operations by enabling employee meetings as well as online yoga classes and chats with yoga practitioners. It can be used to not only communicate face-to-face, but also to share documents and create digital recordings for future reference. It is important that all of us become familiar with the software since it will be used frequently in our daily interactions.

You are invited to attend an online training session on using Zoom virtual meetings software. Join us on March 10, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Annex for a three-hour hands-on training session with our very own Jim Stratos. Masks and proof of vaccines are required, and we will maintain physical distancing. During this session, we will cover the following topics:

- Preparing for your meeting: creating the Zoom meeting, inviting practitioners, setting up the meeting
- Conducting your meeting: Zoom etiquette, incorporating music, engaging participants, ensuring privacy, moderating the chat
- Retrieving the recording: locating and downloading the digital

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ing by responding to this email message.

Namaste,

Shasta

416-123-4567

**Figure 9.5.1** *Sample persuasive message*

Now, review the following video, *Dan Pink on Persuasion* (2014), for an overview of a few persuasive tactics, some of which were used in the email above.

**Dan Pink on Persuasion**



**Knowledge Check**

According to the video, Dan Pink on Persuasion, what does the A, B, C of persuasion stand for?

- ☐ Attunement, bouyancy, clarity
- ☐ Attunement, bargaining, collaboration
- ☐ Atonement, bouyancy, clarity

✓ Check



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## Use the Indirect Approach to Organize Ideas

The message in **Figure 9.5.1** makes use of the indirect method to persuade employees to participate in virtual meeting software training. With the indirect method, you place the key idea near the close of the message. The indirect method involves establishing need before stating the key idea or purpose of the message. By creating a delay, you are using information to influence the mindset of the reader so that your key message will be more easily accepted.

### Persuasive Message Structure

<b>OPENING</b>
introduce the subject or problem
<b>BACKGROUND</b>
establish the need for what you are suggesting
<b>DETAILS</b>
explain using specific detail and evidence
<b>ACTION CLOSE</b>

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Note: When the background information is so brief as it does not warrant a separate paragraph, you may include the background information in the opening paragraph.

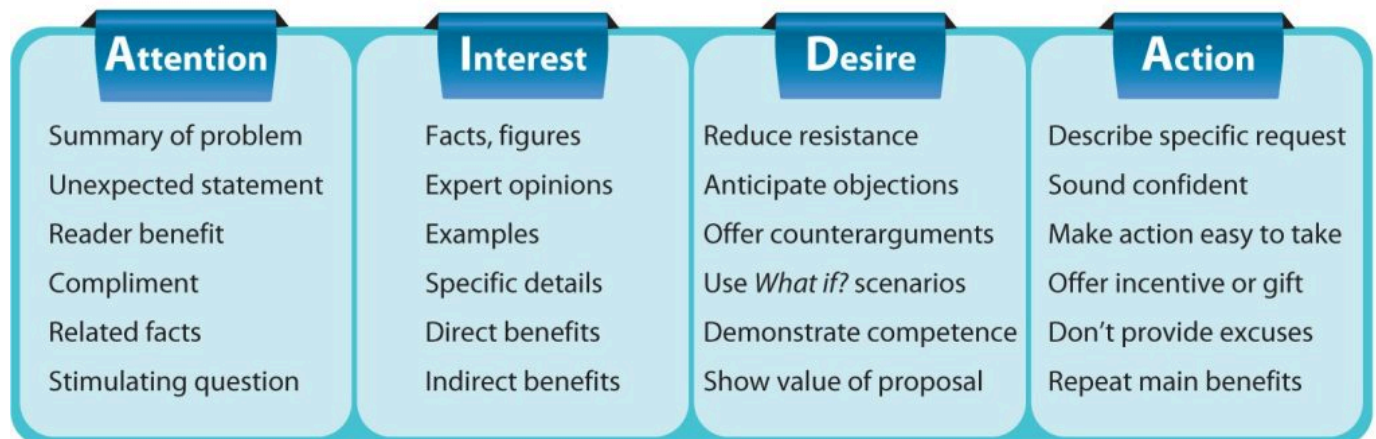
## Emphasize Benefits

To be effective, persuasive messages must not only address the needs of the sender, but also the needs of the receiver. As such, when planning the message, not only should you consider *what's in it* for you, but also *what's in it* for the receiver. In other words, carefully consider the interests of all stakeholders as you craft your message and **stress benefits to the reader**. So, for example, if you were to craft a message that has as its goal to compel employees to wear masks when at work, you would not only mention the order from public health but also discuss the benefits of protecting the health of fellow workers and of oneself.

Consider both the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. The extrinsic benefits of this example consist of protecting the health of fellow workers and the interests of the company. The intrinsic benefits would be the sense of satisfaction felt when participating in a common efforts to help others. Extrinsic benefits are tangible; whereas, intrinsic benefits are intangible.

## Apply the AIDA Model

A structural guide for persuasive messages especially in marketing is the AIDA model, which has been popular since 1898, when Elias St. Elmo Lewis first began to use it to explain personal selling (Oxford Reference, n.d.). This model describes the sequential elements of an effective persuasive message: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.



**Figure 9.5.2:** Each element of the AIDA strategy explained (*Business Communication, 2019*).

<b>Attention</b>	Open the message with information that will capture the reader's attention and that will demonstrate a need: describing a problem or challenge is an example of an effective opening that attracts attention.
<b>Interest</b>	Generate interest by offering a potential solution to the problem, be it a product or service. Ensure that the solution addresses the specific problem described.
<b>Desire</b>	Deepen the interest by adding detail and explanation focusing on the benefits to the reader. Here you may include information about product features, availability, and pricing. Emphasize how the product or service would bring intrinsic and extrinsic benefits.
<b>Action</b>	Convert the reader to action by specifying the required action—like advising them on how to make a purchase, providing them with contact information, offering a coupon, etc.

When using the AIDA model, information can be organized using the indirect method, as follows:

1. An opening that describes a problem or an opportunity.
2. Background information that establishes the need for what you are about to suggest (product, service, solution).
3. An explanation of the product, service, solution you are suggesting, including information about features, costs, functionality, freebies, discounts, etc.

See the example below in **Figure 9.5.3** for an illustration of this structure.

### *Example of a Sales Letter Using the AIDA Model*

Solstice Yoga Studios  
123 Coventry Lane  
Toronto, ON M4X 2X4

June 20, 20XX

Loyal Member  
456 Maple Street  
Toronto, ON M3X 2X5

Dear Loyal Member,

If you are like me, you have had great difficulty maintaining your daily yoga practice over the past two years. The pandemic has resulted in frequent closures of our yoga studio. And though you may have continued with our online yoga classes, we know that these are not the same as practicing in person with fellow yogis. Like me, you probably are looking forward to returning to in-person classes.

We are pleased to share some good news with you. Solstice Yoga Studios is reopening on March 15, 20XX with a mix of our most popular yoga classes and workshops in addition to new offerings at a discounted price for a limited time.

With Ontario Public Health lifting many restrictions on July 15, you will be able to resume your in-studio yoga practice with our certified yoga teachers. In addition, we are offering new weekly workshops at a special introductory rate to help you deepen your practice. You will find that our studios have been updated with state of the art sound equipment to enhance your in-studio experience. We have also updated our change rooms using enviro-friendly features so they are clean and safe to use while respecting our environment. Want to take time to chat with your teachers and other practitioners before or after classes? We

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health-conscious snacks and drinks. Look for a \$5 cafe coupon when you register for your first class.

Space will be limited due to the need for some physical distancing to ensure your safety when you are with us. So be sure to book your weekly classes by July 10 to reserve your spot and take advantage of our reopening specials. To book your classes, you can reach out by phone, via your Solstice account, or our scheduling tool on our website at [Solstice.ca/classes](https://solstice.ca/classes).

We look forward to seeing you again.

Namaste.

Shasta  
416-123-4567

**Figure 9.5.3** *Example of a sales letter using the AIDA model*

### *Knowledge Check*



In what step of the AIDA writing process should you state the reader benefits?

☐ Step 1 - A

☐ Step 2 - I

☐ Step 3 - D

☐ Step 4 - A

☒ Check



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## Promote Your Credibility Through Tone

Tone in persuasive messages carries the day. A persuasive tone is created through the skillful use of appeals, usually blending logical, emotional, temporal, and credibility boosting content. See [Chapter 3.4 Writing to Persuade](#) for more information about these. Use these persuasive devices to create a balanced approach that is confident, informed, accurate, and fair. If you use any appeal to excess, you will lose credibility and may not succeed in your efforts to persuade. Here is an example. Consider the following two claims for a product. Which one would be worth your time and consideration?

1. *With over 100,000 satisfied users, WordApp has become the proven document processing application of choice for mobile devices.*

2. *With over 100,000 users and our frequent upgrades, WordApp has become a reliable document processing application for mobile devices.*

We can easily become impressed with the 100,000 figure, but can we truly believe that this number of users *proves* the application as a solid choice?

Rather than over-writing using claims that are not logically connected, tone down the volume and use realistic and truthful information that will convince the reader of the worth of the application. Using vocabulary that impresses may not necessarily achieve your goal, so use careful consideration when

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These two examples also offer a good opportunity to remind you about the importance of skillfully formulating your persuasive arguments. The first example demonstrates how over-generalization can actually weaken your claim rather than bolster it. Be sure to avoid the common logical fallacies discussed in [Chapter 7.2 Finding and Evaluating Research Sources](#) and explained in **Table 9.2.4** that only serve to create pitfalls for messages that would otherwise be persuasive.

## References

Oxford Reference. (n.d.). AIDA.

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