

CHAPTER 9

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- 1 Discuss the planning tasks that need extra attention when preparing persuasive messages
- 2 Describe the AIDA plan for persuasive messages
- 3 Distinguish between emotional and logical appeals, and discuss how to balance them
- 4 Explain the best way to overcome resistance to your persuasive message, and list four common mistakes in writing persuasive messages
- 5 Compare sales messages with fundraising messages
- 6 List eight guidelines that will help you strengthen your fundraising messages

Writing Persuasive Messages

COMMUNICATION CLOSE-UP AT AT&T'S LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES

www.languageline.com



His wife was giving birth, and he didn't know what to do, so the anxious father-to-be dialed 911. Trouble was, he spoke no English, and the operator couldn't understand what the emergency was. Neither party panicked, however; the 911 operator simply dialed an 800 number that connected her to AT&T's Language Line Services. In minutes, the AT&T operator set up a three-way call with a Spanish interpreter who helped talk the worried husband through the delivery of his first child.

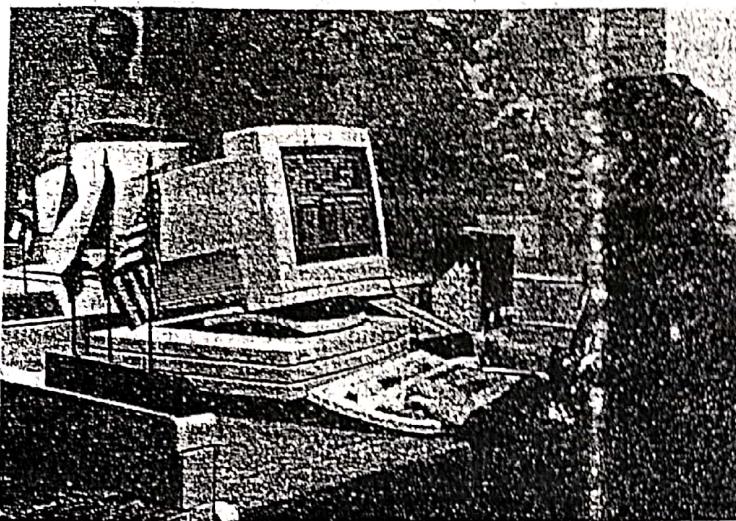
As sales director for Language Line Services, Jeanne Anderson has collected dozens of true-life stories like this, and they all illustrate the same thing: the benefits of dialing a toll-free number from any telephone and being connected at a moment's notice with an interpreter in any of 140 languages—24 hours a day. Over the phone, AT&T interpreters have closed a \$12 million business deal in Taiwan, handled a marriage proposal in Russia, located a missing parent in Germany, and helped hundreds of nurses, doctors, police officers, and business executives communicate with the diverse populations in their own local communities.

After years of experience writing persuasive messages to help sell Language Line Services, Anderson has developed a few principles she always follows: She is selective with the information she includes in her messages—just enumerating all the language offered would fill up a page—and she targets a persuasive message directly to her audience's needs. Her goal is not to manipulate readers but to help them make an intelligent, informed decision about her message. Of course, she also makes sure she highlights specific benefits she knows her audience will find attractive.

For every persuasive message, Anderson starts by answering two questions: "Who is my audience, and what are they going to be interested in?" Once she knows the answer, she starts her message with what she calls a "grabber," or attention-getter, designed specifically for this particular audience. Her next paragraphs build her credibility, create interest, and encourage desire by emphasizing benefits she knows her readers care about.

Anderson follows the same principles whether writing persuasive memos to her staff or composing persuasive e-mail messages to clients. She says the only difference is in the language and tone. "When I write an internal memo, I try to make sure that my personality comes out. Otherwise, I think all the same principles apply, because you really are competing for everyone's time." Overall, you want to make your message interesting, and "you really do want to keep it simple," Anderson says. "Even if the first paragraph is interesting, your reader may think, 'Gee, there's just too much detail here. I'll just read this later when I have more time,' and unfortunately, it gets put on that pile—that 'To Do' pile that never gets done!"

To keep it simple, Anderson avoids showy language, unfamiliar words, and AT&T lingo. She chooses active words and phrases that are "crisp and succinct," using the terminology of her audience's own industry when appropriate. Moreover, she always stresses the positive—for example, saying to a potential customer, "This service will save you



To persuade potential customers to try Language Line Services, Jeanne Anderson finds out who her audience is and what they're interested in. Then she crafts her letters to get attention, create interest, encourage desire, and motivate action.

time," instead of saying, "We know you don't have a lot of time." In short, Anderson uses her own skills with language to help others discover a new way to conquer language barriers—if not to save a life, then to make life simpler for everyone.¹ ■

USING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS FOR PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

Savvy businesspeople such as Jeanne Anderson know that people today ask not only "What should I do?" but also "Why should I do it?" To accomplish her goals, Anderson often uses techniques of persuasion—the attempt to change an audience's attitudes, beliefs, or actions.² "Quite simply, effective persuasion is the ability to present a message in a way that will lead others to support it," says Jay Conger, author of *Winning Em Over*. "It makes audiences feel they have a choice, and they choose to agree."³

The most effective business leaders have a knack for putting together a persuasive argument. They know how to take the pulse of a group and communicate with people in terms they can both understand and embrace.⁴ So whether you're selling real estate or just trying to sell your idea to your boss, writing effective persuasive messages is indeed an important skill. In today's competitive marketplace, applying the three-step writing process to your persuasive messages will help you make them as effective as possible.

Step 1: Planning Persuasive Messages

Unlike routine positive messages (discussed in Chapter 7), persuasive messages aim to influence audiences who are inclined to resist. Therefore, persuasive messages are generally longer, are usually more detailed, and often depend heavily on strategic planning—like that carried out by Jeanne Anderson of AT&T's Language Line Services. Persuasive messages require that you pay particular attention to several planning tasks. For example, because your purpose is to persuade, making sure of your purpose is perhaps the most important planning task. When analyzing your audience for a persuasive message, you may want to delve more deeply than you would for other messages. Your credibility takes on extra importance in a persuasive message. So whenever you're trying to persuade someone, you must make sure your ethics are above reproach.

Learning Objective 1

Discuss the planning tasks that need extra attention when preparing persuasive messages.

For a persuasive message, some planning tasks require more effort.

Analyze Your Purpose

Writing an external persuasive message is one of the most difficult tasks you could undertake. For one thing, your purpose is to persuade people to do something different or to try something new. But people are busy, so they're reluctant to act, especially if it takes time and offers no guarantee of any reward in return. For another, competing

Persuasive requests encounter two problems:

■ Audiences are busy.

■ Audiences receive many competing requests.

requests are plentiful. The public relations departments of many large corporations receive so many persuasive requests for donations that they must sometimes use lotteries to decide which worthy cause to support. Given the complexity and sensitivity of persuasive messages, you must be absolutely sure that your purpose is clear, necessary, and appropriate for written media.

Analyze Your Audience

You must appeal to the specific needs of your audience, especially in persuasive messages.

Chapter 4 discusses the basics of audience analysis, but the process can become much more involved for persuasive messages. To write an effective persuasive argument, you need to search for common ground, points of agreement on which to build. That means you must shape your argument so that others believe your proposal will satisfy their concerns and bring them rewards. But learning about your audience's needs or concerns can take weeks—even months. Why? Because everyone's needs differ, so everyone responds differently to any given message. For instance, not every reader is interested in economy or even in fair play; you may even find that satisfying someone's need for status or appealing to someone's greed may at times be much more effective than emphasizing human generosity or civic duty.

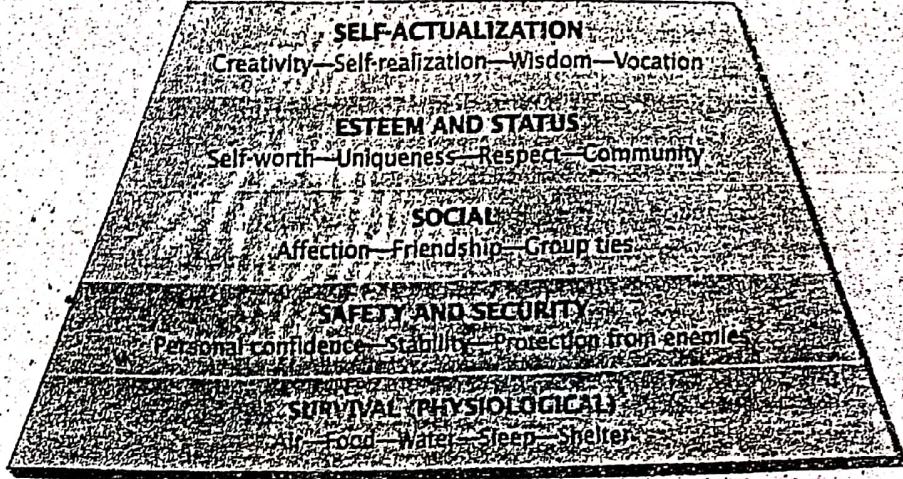
The questions you ask before writing a persuasive message go beyond those you would ask for other types of messages.

It may be necessary to satisfy some needs before others.

Gauging Audience Needs · The best persuasive messages are closely connected to your audience's existing desires and interests.⁵ Consider these important questions: Who is my audience? What are their needs? What do I want them to do? How might they resist? Are there alternative positions I need to examine? What does the decision maker consider the most important issue? How might the organization's culture influence my strategy?

Some theorists believe that certain needs have priority. Figure 9.1 represents psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, with the most basic needs appearing at the bottom of the figure. Maslow suggests that only after lower-level needs have been met will a person seek to fulfill needs on higher levels.⁶ For example, suppose you supervise someone who consistently arrives late for work. You must either persuade him to change or fire him. First, find out why he's coming in late. Is he oversleeping because he has a second job to support his family (a safety and security need)? Is he coming in late because of a misguided desire to have people notice his arrival (an esteem and status need)? Once you've analyzed the need motivating him to arrive late, you can craft an appeal, a "hook" that will interest him in your message about changing his behavior. If the need for safety and security is behind his tardiness, you might say, "Your job is very important to you, I know." If he craves esteem and status, you could say, "You've always seemed interested in being given more responsibility, perhaps even a promotion."

FIGURE 9.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



To assess various individual needs, you can refer to specific information such as demographics (the age, gender, occupation, income, education, and other quantifiable characteristics of the people you're trying to persuade) and psychographics (the personality, attitudes, lifestyle, and other psychological characteristics of an individual). Both types of information are strongly influenced by culture. When analyzing your audience, take into account their cultural expectations and practices so that you don't undermine your persuasive message by using an inappropriate appeal or by organizing your message in a way that seems unfamiliar or uncomfortable to your audience.

Demographics include characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, income, and education.

Psychographics include characteristics such as personality, attitudes, and lifestyle.

Considering Cultural Differences Your understanding and respect for cultural differences will help you satisfy the needs of your audience and will help your audience respect you. That's because persuasion is different in different cultures. In France, using an aggressive, hard-sell technique is no way to win respect. Such an approach would probably antagonize your audience. In Germany, where people tend to focus on technical matters, plan on verifying any figures you use for support, and make sure they are exact. In Sweden, audiences tend to focus on theoretical questions and strategic implications, whereas U.S. audiences are usually concerned with more practical matters.⁷

Cultural differences influence your persuasion attempts.

As with individuals, an organization's culture or subculture heavily influences the effectiveness of messages. All the previous messages in an organization have established a tradition that defines persuasive writing within that culture. When you accept and use these traditions, you establish one type of common ground with your audience. If you reject or never learn these traditions, you'll have difficulty achieving that common ground, which damages both your credibility and your persuasion attempts.

Every message written for a corporation adds to the corporate tradition.

Establish Your Credibility

To persuade a skeptical or hostile audience, you must convince people that you know what you're talking about and that you're not trying to mislead them. Your *credibility* is your capability of being believed because you're reliable and worthy of confidence. Without such credibility, your efforts to persuade will seem manipulative. Research strongly suggests that most managers overestimate their own credibility—considerably.⁸ Establishing your credibility is a process—one that takes time to earn your audience's respect. Some of the best ways to gain credibility are to

Your credibility is defined by how reliable, believable, and trustworthy you are.

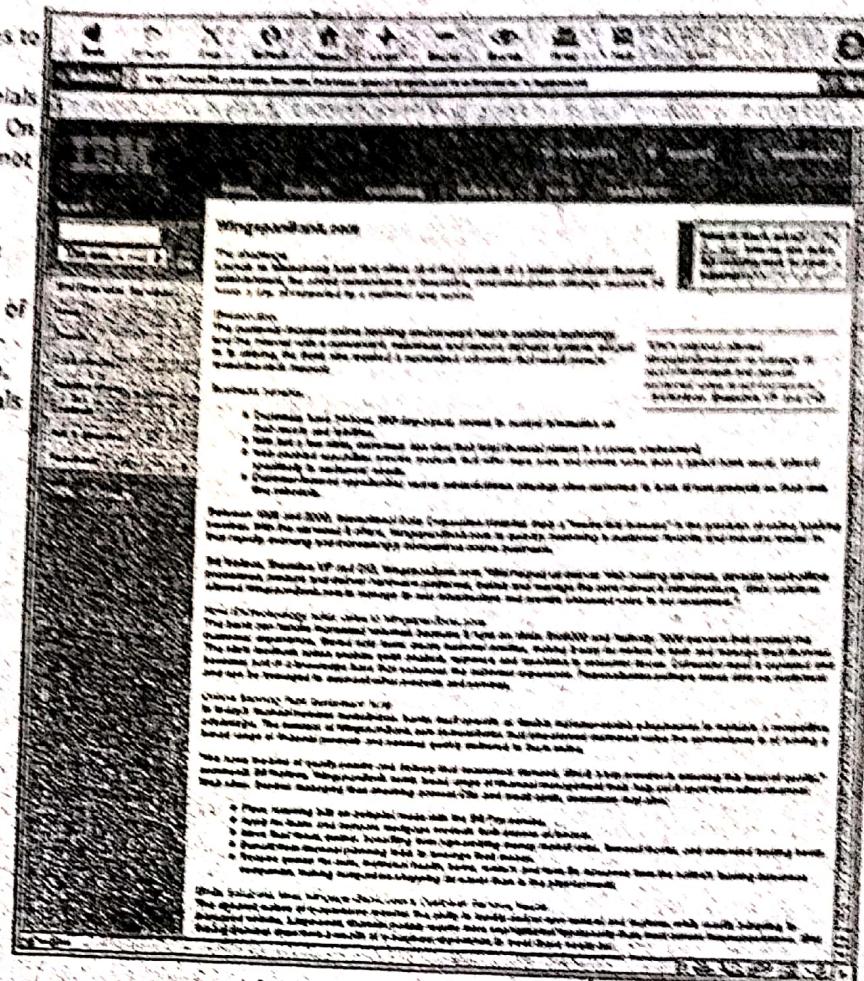
- **Support your message with facts.** Testimonials, documents, guarantees, statistics, and research results all provide seemingly objective evidence for what you have to say, which adds to your credibility. The more specific and relevant your proof, the better.
- **Name your sources.** Telling your audience where your information comes from and who agrees with you always improves your credibility, especially if your sources are already respected by your audience.
- **Be an expert.** Your knowledge of your message's subject area (or even of some other area) helps you give your audience the quality information necessary to make a decision.
- **Establish common ground.** Those beliefs, attitudes, and background experiences that you have in common with members of your audience will help them identify with you.
- **Be enthusiastic.** Your excitement about your subject can infect your audience.
- **Be objective.** Your ability to understand and acknowledge all sides of an issue helps you present fair and logical arguments in your persuasive message.
- **Be sincere.** Your concern, genuineness, good faith, and truthfulness help you focus on your audience's needs.
- **Be trustworthy.** Your honesty and dependability help you earn your audience's respect.
- **Have good intentions.** Your willingness to keep your audience's best interests at heart helps you create persuasive messages that are ethical.

Gain credibility by supporting your argument with facts such as testimonials, documents, guarantees, statistics, and research results.

Your credibility will also be enhanced if you maintain high ethical standards.

Your credibility is improved if you are an expert, enthusiastic, objective, sincere, and trustworthy and if your intentions are good and you establish common ground.

When you use printed messages to build credibility, you generally have limited space for testimonials and other persuasive evidence. On the Internet, however, space is not a problem—you can easily add pages of evidence to convince your audience of your expertise and reliability. You can build credibility by including samples of your work, adding links to third-party supporting documentation, and posting copies of testimonials from satisfied customers.



Strive for High Ethical Standards

The word *persuasion* is viewed by some as negative. They associate persuasion with dishonest and unethical practices, such as coaxing, urging, and sometimes even tricking people into accepting an idea, buying a product, or taking an unwanted or unneeded action. However, the best businesspeople make persuasion positive. They influence audience members by providing information and aiding understanding, which allows audiences the freedom to choose.⁹ Ethical businesspeople inform audiences of the benefits of an idea, an organization, a product, a donation, or an action so that these audiences can recognize just how well the idea, organization, product, donation, or action will satisfy a need they truly have.

For anyone trying to influence people's actions, knowing the law is crucial. However, merely avoiding what is illegal may not always be enough. To maintain the highest standards of business ethics, make every attempt to persuade without manipulating. Choose words that won't be misinterpreted, and be sure you don't distort the truth. Adopt the "you" attitude by showing honest concern for your audience's needs and interests. Your consideration of audience needs is more than ethical; it's the proper use of persuasion. That consideration is likely to achieve the response you intend and to satisfy your audience's needs.

Step 2: Writing Persuasive Messages

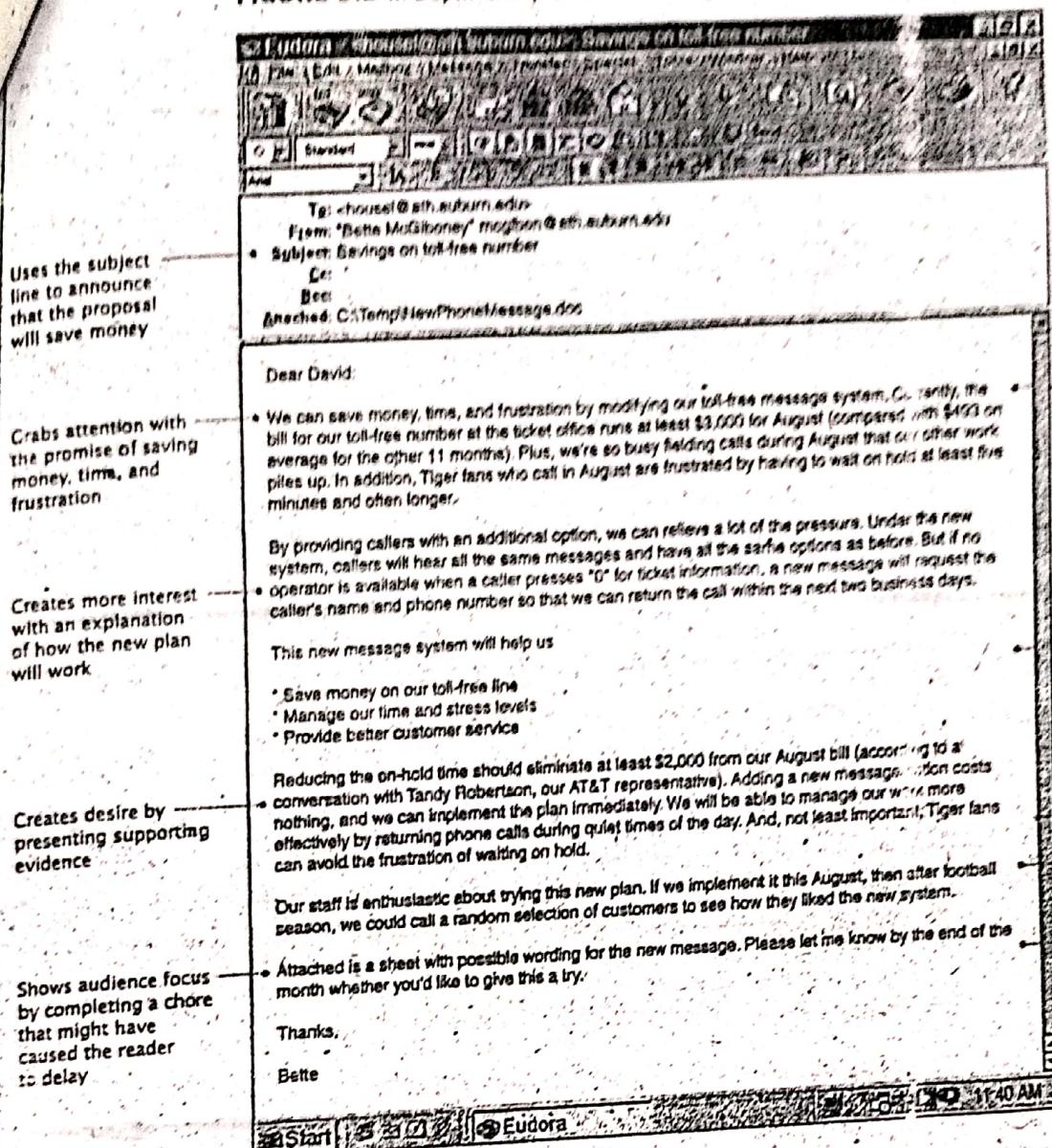
When applying Step 2 to your persuasive messages, you will define your main idea, limit the scope of your message, and group your points in a meaningful way. But you must focus even more effort on choosing the direct or indirect approach.

As with routine and bad-news messages, the best organizational approach is based on your audience's likely reaction to your message. However, because the nature of persuasion is to convince your audience or to change their attitudes, beliefs, or actions, most persuasive messages use the indirect approach. That means you'll want to explain

Positive persuasion leaves your audience free to choose.

To maintain the highest ethics, try to persuade without manipulating.

FIGURE 9.2 In-Depth Critique: E-Mail Message Selling an Idea to a Boss



your reasons and build interest before revealing your purpose. Nevertheless, many situations do call for the direct approach.

If audience members are objective, or if you know they prefer the "bottom line" first (perhaps because it saves them time), the direct approach might be the better choice. You'll also want to use the direct approach when your corporate culture encourages directness. In addition, when a message is long or complex, your readers may become impatient if the main idea is buried seven pages in, so you may want to choose the direct approach for these messages as well.

Bette McGiboney is administrative assistant to the athletic director of Auburn University. Each year, after season tickets have been mailed, the cost of the athletic department's toll-free phone number skyrockets as fans call with questions about their seats, complaints about receiving the wrong number of tickets, or orders for instant-minute tickets. The August phone bill is usually over \$3,000, in part because each customer is put on hold while operators serve others. McGiboney came up with an idea that could save the company money and save ticket holders time, so she composed an e-mail message that uses the direct approach (see Figure 9.2).

If you use the direct approach as Betty McGiboney does in Figure 9.2, keep in mind that even though your audience may be easy to convince, you'll still want to

include at least a brief justification or explanation. Don't expect your reader to accept your idea on blind faith. For example, consider the following two openers:

Poor

I recommend building our new retail outlet on the West Main Street site.

Improved

After comparing the four possible sites for our new retail outlet, I recommend West Main Street as the only site that fulfills our criteria for visibility, proximity to mass transportation, and square footage.

Choice of approach is also influenced by your position (or authority) within the organization relative to your audience's.

As with other business messages, Step 3 of the writing process helps guarantee the success of your persuasive messages.

Your choice between the direct and indirect approaches is also influenced by the extent of your authority, expertise, or power in an organization. As a first-line manager writing a persuasive message to top management, you may try to be diplomatic and use an indirect approach. But your choice could backfire if some managers perceive your indirectness as manipulative and time wasting. On the other hand, you may try to save your supervisor's time by using a direct approach, which might be perceived as brash and presumptuous. Similarly, when writing a persuasive message to employees, you may use the indirect approach to ease into a major change, but your audience might see your message as weak, even wishy-washy. You need to think carefully about your corporate culture and what your audience expects before selecting your approach.

Step 3: Completing Persuasive Messages

The length and complexity of persuasive messages make applying Step 3 even more crucial to your success. When you evaluate your content, try to judge your argument objectively and seriously appraise your credibility. When revising for clarity and conciseness, carefully match the purpose and organization to audience needs.

Your design elements must complement, not detract from, your argument. In addition, make sure your delivery methods fit your audience's expectations as well as your purpose. Finally, meticulous proofreading will identify any mechanical or spelling errors that would weaken your persuasive message.

DEVELOPING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

Your success as a businessperson is closely tied to your ability to convince others to accept or act on your recommendations. Minimally, you want them to pay close attention to your ideas and value your contributions. Of course, for years you have been doing this informally. Perhaps you persuaded your coach to let you play a position on a team or you convinced students to vote for you in a school election. You may even have persuaded your professor to change a grade. Regardless, being able to persuade others in a written letter or memo is vital in today's competitive workplace. In the following section, we discuss some formal strategies you can use to strengthen your persuasive skills.

Four essential persuasion strategies:

- Framing your arguments
- Balancing your appeals
- Reinforcing your position
- Overcoming audience resistance

Learning Objective 2

Describe the AIDA plan for persuasive messages

Strategies for Persuasive Messages

Whether you use a direct or an indirect approach, you must convince your reader that your request or idea is reasonable. Effective persuasion involves four distinct and essential strategies: framing your arguments, balancing emotional and logical appeals, reinforcing your position, and dealing with resistance. The amount of detail you pursue in each of these strategies varies according to the complexity of your idea or request.

Framing Your Arguments

To effectively persuade your audience, you need to frame your argument in the most effective way. Most persuasive messages follow an organizational plan that goes beyond the indirect approach used for negative messages. The opening does more than serve as a buffer; it grabs your audience's attention. The explanation section does more

TABLE 9.1 THE AIDA ORDER OF PERSUASION

Phase	Objective
Attention	Get the reader's attention with a benefit that is of real interest or value.
Interest	Build the reader's interest by further explaining benefits and appealing to his or her logic or emotions.
Desire	Build desire by showing how your offer can really help the reader.
Action	Give a strong and simple call to action and provide a convenient means for the reader to take the next step.

than present reasons, and it's expanded to two sections. The first incites your audience's interest, and the second changes your audience's attitude. Finally, your close does more than end on a positive note with a statement of what action is needed; it emphasizes reader benefits and motivates readers to take specific action. Although similar to the indirect approach of negative messages, this persuasive approach, called the AIDA plan, pushes the envelope in each of four phases: (1) attention, (2) interest, (3) desire, and (4) action (see Table 9.1).

- **Attention.** Make your audience want to hear about your problem or idea. Write a brief and engaging opening sentence, with no extravagant claims or irrelevant points. And be sure to find some common ground on which to build your case. In the letter in Figure 9.3, Randy Thumwolt uses the AIDA plan in a persuasive memo about his program to reduce Host Marriott's annual plastics costs and to curtail consumer complaints about the company's recycling record.
- **Interest.** Explain the relevance of your message to your audience. Continuing the theme you started with, paint a more detailed picture with words. Get your audience thinking. In Figure 9.3, Thumwolt's interest section introduces an additional, unforeseen problem with plastic product containers. Also, Thumwolt breaks out his suggestions into an easy-to-read list.
- **Desire.** Make audience members want to change by explaining how the change will benefit them. Reduce resistance by thinking up and answering in advance any questions the audience might have. If your idea is complex, explain how you would implement it. Back up your claims in order to increase audience willingness to take the action that you suggest in the next section. Just remember to make sure that all evidence is directly relevant to your point.
- **Action.** Suggest the action you want readers to take. Make it more than a statement such as "Please institute this program soon" or "Send me a refund." This is the opportunity to remind readers of the benefits of taking action. The secret of a successful action phase is making the action easy. In sales letters, AT&T's Jeanne Anderson might ask readers to call a toll-free number for more information. You might ask your audience to use an enclosed order form, or to use a prepaid envelope for donations. Include a deadline when applicable.

The AIDA plan is tailor-made for using the indirect approach, allowing you to save your main idea for the action phase. However, it can also be used for the direct approach, in which case you use your main idea as an attention-getter, build interest with your argument, create desire with your evidence, and emphasize your main idea in the action phase with the specific action you want your audience to take.

When your AIDA message uses an indirect approach and is delivered by memo or e-mail, keep in mind that your subject line usually catches your readers' eye first. Your challenge is to make it interesting and relevant enough to capture reader attention without revealing your main idea. If you put your request in the subject line, you're likely to get a quick "no" before you've had a chance to present your arguments.

Organize persuasive messages using the AIDA plan:

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

Begin every persuasive message with an attention-getting statement that is

- Personalized
- You-oriented
- Straightforward
- Relevant

In the interest section

- Continue the opening theme in greater detail
- Relate benefits specifically to the attention-getter

In the desire section

- Provide evidence to prove your claim
- Draw attention to any enclosures

End by

- Suggesting a specific step the audience can take
- Restating how the audience will benefit by acting as you wish
- Making action easy

Using AIDA with the indirect approach allows you to save your idea for the action phase; using it with the direct approach allows you to use your main idea as your attention-getter.

When using the indirect approach, make subject lines interesting without revealing your purpose.

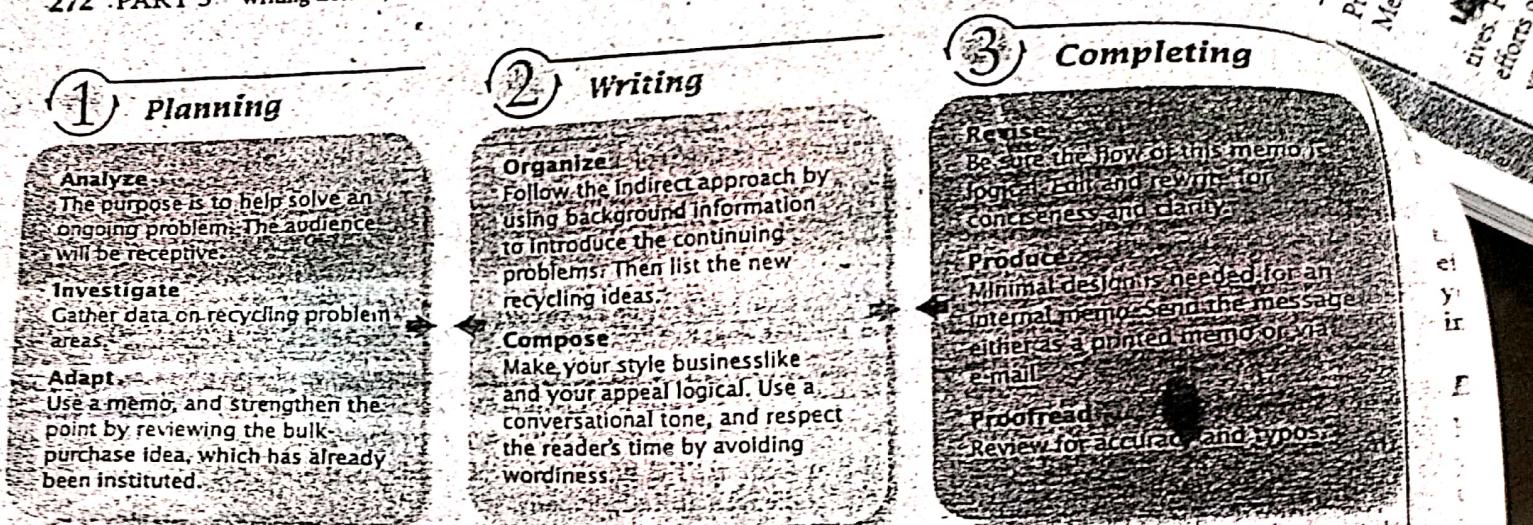
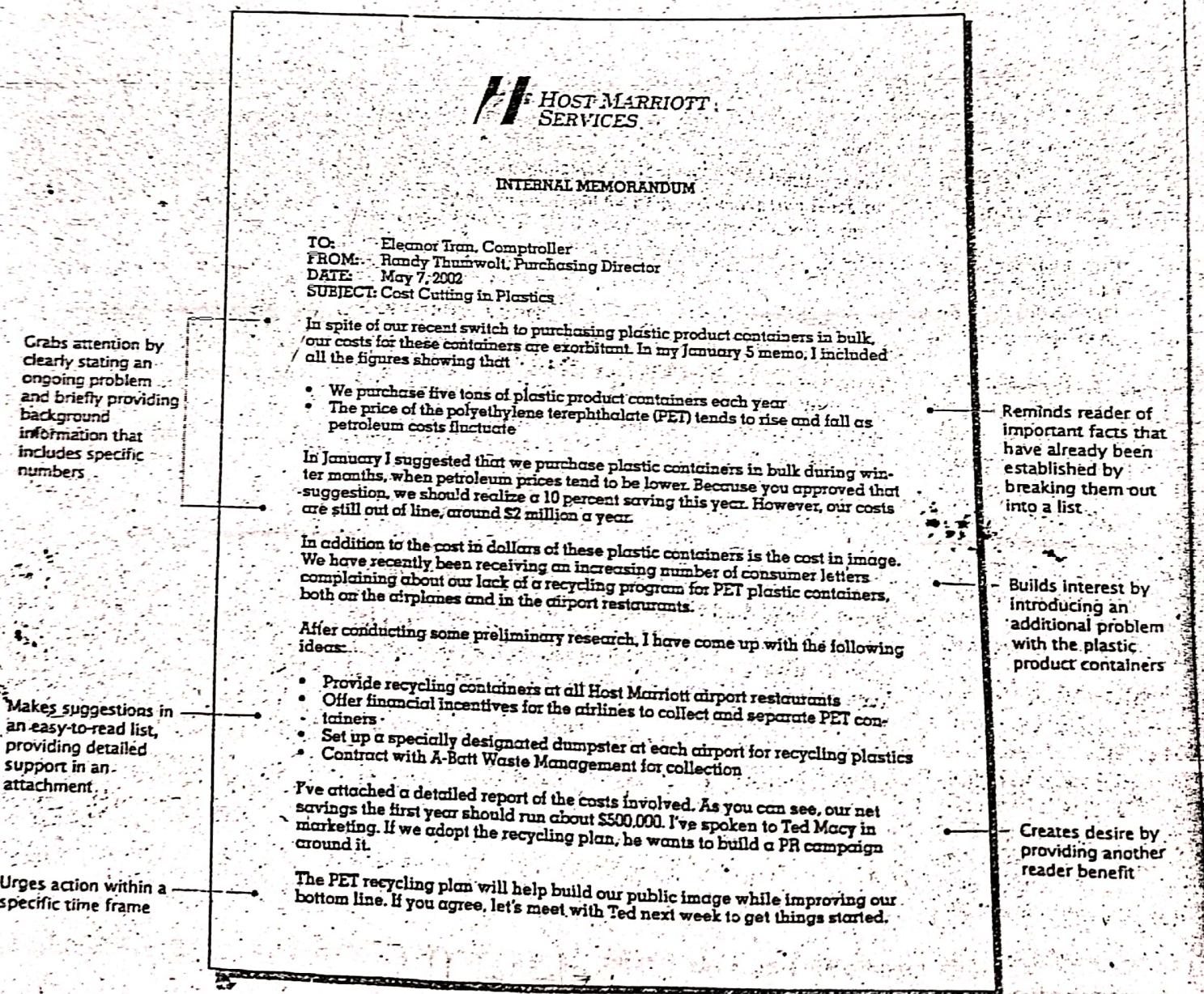


FIGURE 9.3 In-Depth Critique: Persuasive Letter Using the AIDA-Plan



Another thing to keep in mind when using the AIDA plan is to narrow your objectives. Focus on your primary goal when presenting your case, and concentrate your efforts on accomplishing that one goal. For example, if your main idea is to convince your company to install a new phone-messaging system, leave discussions about switching long-distance carriers until another day—unless it's relevant to your argument.

To make the AIDA plan more successful, focus closely on one goal only.

Balancing Emotional and Logical Appeals

How do you actually convince an audience that your position is the right one, that your plan will work, or that your company will do the most with readers' donations? One way is to appeal to the audience's minds and hearts. Most persuasive messages include both emotional and logical appeals. Together, these two elements have a good chance of persuading your audience to act.

Finding the right balance between the two types of appeals depends on four factors: (1) the actions you wish to motivate, (2) your reader's expectations, (3) the degree of resistance you must overcome, and (4) how far you feel empowered to go in selling your point of view.¹⁰ When you're persuading someone to accept a complex idea, take a serious step, or make a large and important decision, lean toward logic and make your emotional appeal subtle. However, when you're persuading someone to purchase a product, join a cause, or make a donation, you'll rely a bit more heavily on emotion.

Learning Objective 3

Distinguish between emotional and logical appeals, and discuss how to balance them

Both emotional and logical appeals are needed to write successful persuasive messages.

Emotional appeals are best if subtle.

Emotional Appeals An emotional appeal calls on human feelings, basing the argument on audience needs or sympathies; however, such an appeal must be subtle.¹¹ For instance, you can make use of the emotion surrounding certain words. The word *freedom* evokes strong feelings, as do words such as *success*, *prestige*, *credit record*, *savings*, *free*, *value*, and *comfort*. Such words put your audience in a certain frame of mind and help them accept your message. However, emotional appeals aren't necessarily effective by themselves. Emotion works with logic in a unique way: People need to find rational support for an attitude they've already embraced emotionally.

Logical Appeals A logical appeal calls on human reason. In any argument you might use to persuade an audience, you make a claim and then support your claim with reason or evidence. When appealing to your audience's logic, you might use three types of reasoning:

- **Analogy.** With analogy, you reason from specific evidence to specific evidence. For instance, to persuade employees to attend a planning session, you might use a town meeting analogy, comparing your company to a small community and your employees to valued members of that community.
- **Induction.** With induction, you reason from specific evidence to a general conclusion. To convince potential customers that your product is best, you might report the results of test marketing in which individuals preferred your product over others. After all, if some individuals prefer it, so will others.
- **Deduction.** With deduction, you might reason from a generalization to a specific conclusion. To persuade your boss to hire additional employees, you might point to industry-wide projections and explain that industry activity (and thus your company's business) will be increasing rapidly over the next three months, so you'll need more employees to handle



Patagonia, leading designer and distributor of outdoor gear, does its best to persuade customers not only to buy its environmentally safe clothing but to actively protect and support the earth's environment. The company uses words and pictures in its persuasive messages to help people make an emotional connection with the environment.

Logical appeals can use

- Analogy
- Induction
- Deduction

Avoid faulty logic such as hasty generalizations, begging the question, attacking your opponent, oversimplifying, assuming a false cause, using faulty analogies, and using illogical support.

No matter what reasoning method you use, any argument or statement can appear to be true when it's actually false. Whenever you appeal to your audience's reason, do everything you can to strengthen your argument by finding common ground (basing your major argument on points that your audience already accepts) and stating your points clearly. Finally, keep your arguments relevant, well grounded, and systematic. To avoid faulty logic, practice the following guidelines.¹²

- Avoid hasty generalizations. Make sure you have plenty of evidence before drawing conclusions.
- Avoid begging the question. Make sure you can support your claim without simply restating it in different words.
- Avoid attacking your opponent. Be careful to address the real question. Attack the argument your opponent is making, not your opponent's character.
- Avoid oversimplifying a complex issue. Make sure you present all the factors rather than relying on an "either/or" statement that makes it look as if only two choices are possible.
- Avoid assuming a false cause. Use cause-and-effect reasoning correctly; do not assume that one event caused another just because it happened first.
- Avoid faulty analogies. Be sure that the two objects or situations being compared are similar enough for the analogy to hold. Even if A resembles B in one respect, it may not hold true in other important respects.
- Avoid illogical support. Make sure the connection between your claim and your support is truly logical and not based on a leap of faith, a missing premise, or irrelevant evidence.

Reinforcing Your Position

Your language helps reinforce your position.

Semantics is the meaning of words and other symbols.

Once you have framed your arguments and chosen your appeal, you can concentrate on strengthening your message with some important persuasive tools. Effective persuaders such as Jeanne Anderson know that the facts alone may not be enough to persuade your audience. So they supplement numerical data with examples, stories, metaphors, and analogies to make their position come alive. They use language to paint a vivid picture of the persuader's point of view.¹³

Semantics Say that you're trying to build your credibility. How do you let your audience know that you're enthusiastic and trustworthy? Simply making an outright claim that you have these traits is sure to raise suspicion. However, you can use *semantics* (the meaning of words and other symbols) to do much of the job for you. The words you choose to state your message say much more than their dictionary definition.¹⁴

Instead of This**Say This**

I think we should attempt to get approval on this before it's too late. Let's get immediate approval on this.

It seems to me that . . .

I believe . . .

I've been thinking lately that maybe someone could . . .

After careful thought over the past two months, I've decided that . . .

This plan could work if we really push it.

With our support, this plan will work.

Two ways of using semantics are choosing your words carefully and using abstractions to enhance emotional content.

Another way semantics can affect persuasive messages is in the variety of meanings that people attribute to certain words. As discussed in Chapter 5, abstract words are subject to interpretation because they refer to things that people cannot experience with their senses. So you can use abstractions to enhance the emotional content of a persuasive message. For example, you may be able to sell more flags by appealing to your audience's patriotism than by describing the color and size of the flags. You may have better luck collecting an overdue bill by mentioning honesty and fair play than by repeating the sum owed and the date it was due. However, be sure to include the details

along with the abstractions; the very fact that you're using abstract words leaves room for misinterpretation.

Other Tools Using semantics skillfully isn't your only persuasive tool. Here are some additional techniques you can use to strengthen your persuasive messages.¹⁵

- Be moderate. Asking your audience to make major changes in attitudes or beliefs will most likely evoke a negative response. However, asking audience members to take one step toward that change may be a more reasonable goal.
- Focus on your goal. Your message will be clearest if you shift your focus away from changing minds and emphasize the action you want your audience to take.
- Use simple language. In most persuasive situations, your audience will be cautious, watching for fantastic claims, insupportable descriptions, and emotional manipulation. So speak plainly and simply.
- Anticipate opposition. Think of every possible objection in advance. In your message, you might raise and answer some of these counterarguments.
- Provide sufficient support. It is up to you to prove that the change you seek is necessary.
- Be specific. Back up your claims with evidence, and when necessary cite actual facts and figures. Let your audience know that you've done your homework.
- Create a win-win situation. Make it possible for both you and your audience to gain something. Audience members will find it easier to deal with change if they stand to benefit.
- Time your messages appropriately. The time to sell roofs is right after the tornado. Timing is crucial in persuasive messages.
- Speak metaphorically. Metaphors create powerful pictures. One metaphor can convey a lifetime of experience or a head full of logic.
- Use anecdotes and stories to make your points. Anecdotes tie it all together—the logic and the emotions. Don't tell your audience what kinds of problems they can have if their system crashes. Tell them what happened to Jeff Porte when his hard drive crashed in the middle of his annual sales presentation.

In addition to semantics, you have other persuasive tools at your disposal.

All these tools will help your persuasive message be accepted, but none of them will actually overcome your audience's resistance. Whether based on emotion or logic, your argument must be strong enough to persuade people to act.

Dealing with Resistance

The best way to deal with audience resistance is to eliminate it. If you expect a hostile audience, one biased against your plan from the beginning, present all sides—cover all options, explaining the pros and cons of each. You'll gain additional credibility if you present these options before presenting the decision.¹⁶

To uncover audience objections, try some "What if?" scenarios. Poke holes in your own theories and ideas before your audience does. Then find solutions to the problems you've uncovered. Recognize that people support what they help create, and ask your audience for their thoughts on the subject before you put your argument together. Let your audience recommend some solutions. With enough thought and effort, you may even be able to turn problems into opportunities; for example, you may show how your proposal will be more economical in the long run, even though it may cost more now. Just be sure to be thorough, open, and objective about all the facts and alternatives. When putting together persuasive arguments, avoid common mistakes such as these:¹⁷

- Using an up-front hard sell. Setting out a strong position at the start of a persuasive message gives potential opponents something to grab onto—and fight against.
- Resisting compromise. Persuasion is a process of give and take. As one expert points out, a persuader rarely changes another person's behavior or viewpoint without altering his or her own in the process.

Learning Objective 4

Explain the best way to overcome resistance to your persuasive message, and list four common mistakes in writing persuasive messages

You can overcome resistance by presenting the pros and cons of all sides of your argument.

Avoiding common mistakes helps you overcome resistance.

✓ CHECKLIST: DEVELOPING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

A. Get your reader's attention

1. Open with a reader benefit, a stimulating question, a problem, or an unexpected statement.
2. Discuss something your audience can agree with (establishing common ground).
3. Demonstrate that you understand the audience's concerns.

B. Build your reader's interest

1. Elaborate on the main benefit.
2. Explain the relevance of your message to your audience.

C. Increase your reader's desire

1. Make audience members want to change by explaining how the change will benefit them.
2. Back up your claims with relevant evidence.

D. Motivate your reader to take action

1. Confidently ask for the audience's cooperation.
2. Stress the positive results of the action.
3. Include the due date (if any) for a response, and tie it in with audience benefits.
4. Include one last reminder of the audience benefit.
5. Make the desired action clear and easy.

E. Balance emotional and logical appeals

1. Use emotional appeals to help the audience accept your message.
2. Use logical appeals when presenting facts and evidence for complex ideas or recommendations.
3. Avoid faulty logic.

F. Reinforce your position

1. Use semantics to build credibility and enhance the emotional content of your message.
2. Use a variety of critical thinking and effective writing tools to strengthen your case.

G. Deal with resistance

1. Anticipate and answer possible objections. Turn them into opportunities when possible. Otherwise, give assurance that you will handle them as best you can.
2. Try "What if?" scenarios to poke holes in your theories and then find solutions.
3. Let others help you find solutions to problems that you uncover.
4. Present the pros and cons of all options.
5. Avoid common mistakes such as using a hard sell up front, resisting compromise, relying solely on great arguments, and assuming persuasion is a one-shot effort.

H. Increase the effectiveness of your AIDA plan

1. Use the AIDA plan for both direct and indirect approaches.
2. Be careful not to give your message away in the subject line.
3. Limit your objectives by focusing on your primary goal.

■ Relying solely on great arguments. In persuading people to change their minds, great arguments matter, but they are only one part of the equation. Your ability to create a mutually beneficial framework for your position, to connect with your audience on the right emotional level, and to communicate through vivid language are all just as important; they bring your argument to life.

■ Assuming persuasion is a one-shot effort. Persuasion is a process, not a one-time event. More often than not, persuasion involves listening to people, testing a position, developing a new position that reflects new input, more testing, more compromise, and so on.

Successful persuasive messages depend on your ability to frame your argument, balance emotional and logical appeals, reinforce your position, and overcome resistance. Using these strategies will help you craft strong persuasive messages, no matter what the situation. To review the steps involved in developing persuasive messages, see this chapter's "Checklist: Developing Persuasive Messages."

Types of Persuasive Requests

People write innumerable persuasive messages within an organization: selling a supervisor on an idea for cutting costs, suggesting more efficient operating procedures, eliciting cooperation from competing departments, winning employee support for a new benefits package, requesting money for new equipment or funding for a special project. Similarly, people may send a variety of persuasive messages to people outside the organization: requesting favors, demanding adjustments, asking for information, soliciting funds and cooperation, or collecting an overdue debt. (For some tips in this last area, see "Focusing on Ethics: Writing Effective Collection Messages.")

Persuasive requests are used inside and outside the organization.

Writing Effective Collection Messages

The purpose of the collection message is to collect past-due accounts. Effective writers recognize that collection is a sensitive issue; not only must you maintain goodwill while persuading customers to make the payment, but you must be careful not to embarrass them. In fact, your job is to neutralize customers' feelings by accentuating the benefits of complying with your request for payment. If that strategy fails, you may have to stress the unpleasant consequences of not acting. But stay within the boundaries of the law.

Illegal Practices

The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act of 1978 outlines a number of restrictions on collection procedures. Chief among them are falsely implying that a lawsuit has been filed; contacting the debtor's employer or relatives about the debt; communicating to other persons that the person is in debt; harassing the debtor; using abusive, obscene, or defamatory language; intentionally causing mental distress; or threatening violence.

The law also delineates when you may contact a debtor, how many times you may call, and what information you must provide to the debtor (timely responses, accurate records, and understandable documents). However, that doesn't mean you can't be tough in collection letters. As long as what you state is true and lawful, it can't be construed as harassment or misrepresentation. Collection is a process, not just a single demand. As the past-due period lengthens, a series of collection letters reflecting the increasing seriousness of the problem is sent to the customer at predetermined intervals.

Notification and Reminder Stages

A standard notification notice is generally a form letter or statement, often computerized, clearly stating the amount due, the date due, the penalties for late payment, and the total amount remaining to be paid. If the payment has not been received within a few days after the due date, most creditors send out a gentle reminder. The tone for both of these standardized letters is reassuring, conveying the company's assumption that some minor problem has delayed payment. In other words, the firm still believes that the customer has every intention of paying what is due and need only be reminded.

Inquiry Stage

As frustrating as it may be to send out a reminder and still get no response, don't assume that your customer plans to ignore the debt, especially if the customer has paid bills promptly in the past. So avoid accusations in your inquiry message. However, the time has passed for assuming that the delay is merely an oversight, so you may assume that some unusual circumstance is preventing payment. Personalization at this stage is appropriate because you're asking your customer to work out an individualized solution.

Appeal Stage

The appeal stage represents a significant escalation. Convey your desire to collect the overdue payment immediately and your willingness to get serious, but avoid any overt threats. To communicate a sense of urgency, you might resort to a letter signed by a top official in the company or to a negative appeal. However, an urgent notice still leaves an opening for the debtor to make a payment without losing face.

Ultimatum Stage

Some people's finances are in such disorder that you won't get their attention until you send an ultimatum. Even then, maintain a polite, businesslike manner and avoid defaming or harassing the debtor. Itemize the precise consequences of not paying the bill so that you can encourage debtors to reevaluate their priorities. Remember, you're no longer interested in hearing why it has taken them so long to respond; you're interested in putting your claim at the top of their list. The tone of the ultimatum need not be so personal or individualized as the inquiry or appeal.

If the ultimatum doesn't yield results, the only remaining remedy is to actually begin legal collection procedures. As a final courtesy, you may wish to send the debtor a notice of the action you're about to take. By maintaining until the bitter end your respect for the customer, you may still salvage some goodwill.

Career Applications

1. Why is it important to maintain goodwill in your collection letter?
2. What should you assume about the customer when writing a collection letter? Why?

The most important thing to remember when preparing a persuasive request is to keep your request within bounds. Nothing is as distressing as a request so general, so all-encompassing, or so inconsiderate that it seems impossible to grant, no matter how worthy the cause. Therefore, when making a persuasive request, take special care to highlight both the direct and the indirect benefits of fulfilling it.

For example, if you want to persuade your supervisor to institute flextime, a direct benefit for that person might be the reduced workload or the enhanced prestige. An

Make only reasonable requests

Highlight the direct and indirect benefits of complying with your request.

indirect benefit might be better employee morale once flextime is instituted. If you are asking someone to respond to a survey, you might offer a premium as the direct benefit and a chance to make a meaningful contribution as the indirect benefit. As examples of persuasive requests, let's look at two specific types: persuasive requests for action and persuasive claims and requests for adjustments.

Persuasive Requests for Action

When making a persuasive request for action, be sure to use the AIDA plan to frame your argument.

Whether you're requesting a favor or a budget increase, remember to use the AIDA plan to frame your message. Begin with an attention-getting device. Show readers that you know something about their concerns and that you have some reason for making such a request. In this type of persuasive message, more than in most others, a flattering comment about your reader is acceptable, as long as it's sincere.

Use the interest and desire sections of your message to cover what you know about the situation you're requesting action on: the facts and figures, the benefits of helping, and any history or experience that will enhance your appeal. Your goals are (1) to gain credibility for you and your request and (2) to make your readers believe that helping you will indeed help solve a significant problem. Be careful not to doom your request to failure by asking your reader to do all your work for you. For example, don't ask your readers to

- Provide information that you were too lazy to seek
- Take action that will save you from embarrassment or inconvenience
- Provide total financial support for a cause that nobody else is supporting

Once you've demonstrated that your message is relevant to your reader, you can close with a request for some specific action. Be aware, however, that a persuasive memo to a colleague is somewhat more subdued than a persuasive letter to an outsider would be. Leslie Jorgensen wrote the memo in Figure 9.4. She's excited about the new Airbus A380 and thinks that purchasing this plane for appropriate markets could help Qantas meet its growth need; while at the same time lower its operating costs. She now needs her boss's approval for a study of the plane's market potential.

When requesting a favor that is routine (such as asking someone to attend a meeting in your absence), use the direct approach and the format for routine messages (see Chapter 7). However, when asking for a special favor (such as asking someone to chair an event or to serve as the team leader because you can no longer fill that role), use persuasive techniques to convince your reader of the value of the project. Include all necessary information about the project and any facts and figures that will convince your reader that his or her contribution will be enjoyable, easy, important, and of personal benefit.

Persuasive Claims and Requests for Adjustments

Although persuasive claims and adjustment requests are sometimes referred to as complaint letters, your goal is to persuade someone to make an adjustment in your favor; you're not merely getting a complaint off your chest. You reach your goal by demonstrating the difference between what you expected and what you actually got.

Most claim letters are routine messages and use the direct approach discussed in Chapter 7. However, suppose you purchase something and, after the warranty expires, you discover that the item was defective. You write the company a routine request asking for a replacement, but your request is denied. You're not satisfied, and you still believe you have a strong case. Perhaps you just didn't communicate it well enough the first time. Persuasion is necessary in such cases.

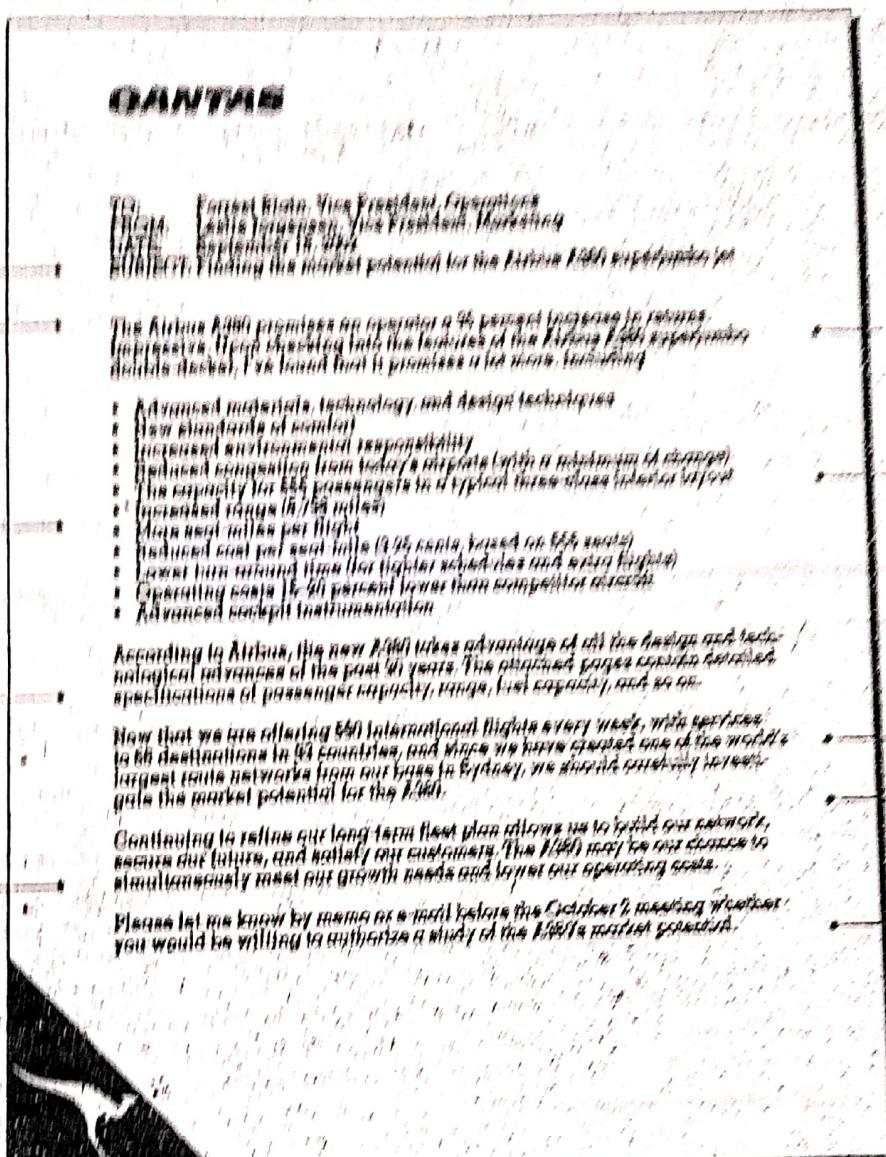
You can't threaten to withhold payment, so try to convey the essentially negative information in a way that will get positive results. Fortunately, most people in business are open to settling your claim fairly. It's to their advantage to maintain your goodwill and to resolve your problem quickly.

The key ingredients of a good persuasive claim are a complete and specific review of the facts and a confident and positive tone. Assume that the other person is not trying to cheat you, but that you also have the right to be satisfied with the transaction.

The goal of a persuasive claim or request for adjustment is to convince someone to make an adjustment in your favor.

Make your persuasive claims • Complete and specific when reviewing the facts
• Confident and positive in tone

FIGURE 9.4 In-Depth Critical Persuasion: Memo Requesting Action



Talk only about the complaint at hand, not about other issues involving similar products or other complaints about the company. Your goal is to solve a particular problem, and your audience is most likely to help if you focus on the audience benefits of doing so (rather than focusing on the disadvantages of neglecting your complaint).

Begin persuasive claims by stating the basic problem (or with a sincere compliment, rhetorical question, agreeable assertion, or brief review of what's been done about the problem). Include a statement that both you and your audience can agree with or that clarifies what you wish to convince your audience about. Be as specific as possible about what you want to happen.

Next, give your reader a good reason for granting your claim. Show how your audience is responsible for the problem, and appeal to your reader's sense of fair play, goodwill, or moral responsibility. Explain it, don't feel about the problem, don't get carried away, don't complain too much, and don't make threats. Make sure your request is calm and reasonable.

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Finally, state your request specifically and confidently. Make sure your request proceeds logically from the problem and the facts you've explained. Remember to specify a deadline for action (when necessary or desirable). And don't forget to remind your audience of the main benefit of granting your claim. For a review of the tasks involved in writing persuasive claims and requests for adjustments, see this chapter's "Checklist: Persuasive Claims and Requests for Adjustments."

After you review this checklist, look at the letter in Figure 9.5, and note the improvements that could be made. Figure 9.6 is a revised version of this letter that should yield much more favorable results. As Figure 9.5 illustrates, the best approach to resolving problems is to engage in a reasonable exchange rather than an adversarial struggle.

DEVELOPING SALES AND FUNDRAISING MESSAGES

Two distinctive types of persuasive messages are sales and fundraising messages. These messages are often sent in special direct-mail packages that can include brochures, reply forms, or other special inserts. Both types of messages are often written by specialized and highly skilled professionals, such as Jeanne Anderson of AT&T Language Line Services.

How do sales messages differ from fundraising messages? Sales messages are usually sent by for-profit organizations persuading readers to spend money on products for themselves. However, fundraising messages are usually sent by nonprofit organizations persuading readers to donate money or time to help others. Aside from these dif-

CHECKLIST: PERSUASIVE CLAIMS AND REQUESTS FOR ADJUSTMENTS**A. Attention**

1. For your opening, use one of the following: sincere compliment, rhetorical question, agreeable comment or assertion, statement of the basic problem, or brief review of what has been done about the problem.
2. At the beginning, state something that you and the audience can agree on or that you wish to convince the audience about.

B. Interest and desire

1. Provide a description that shows the members of your audience that their firm is responsible for the problem.
2. Make your request factual, logical, and reasonable.
3. Appeal to the audience's sense of fair play, desire for customer goodwill, need for a good reputation, or sense of legal or moral responsibility.

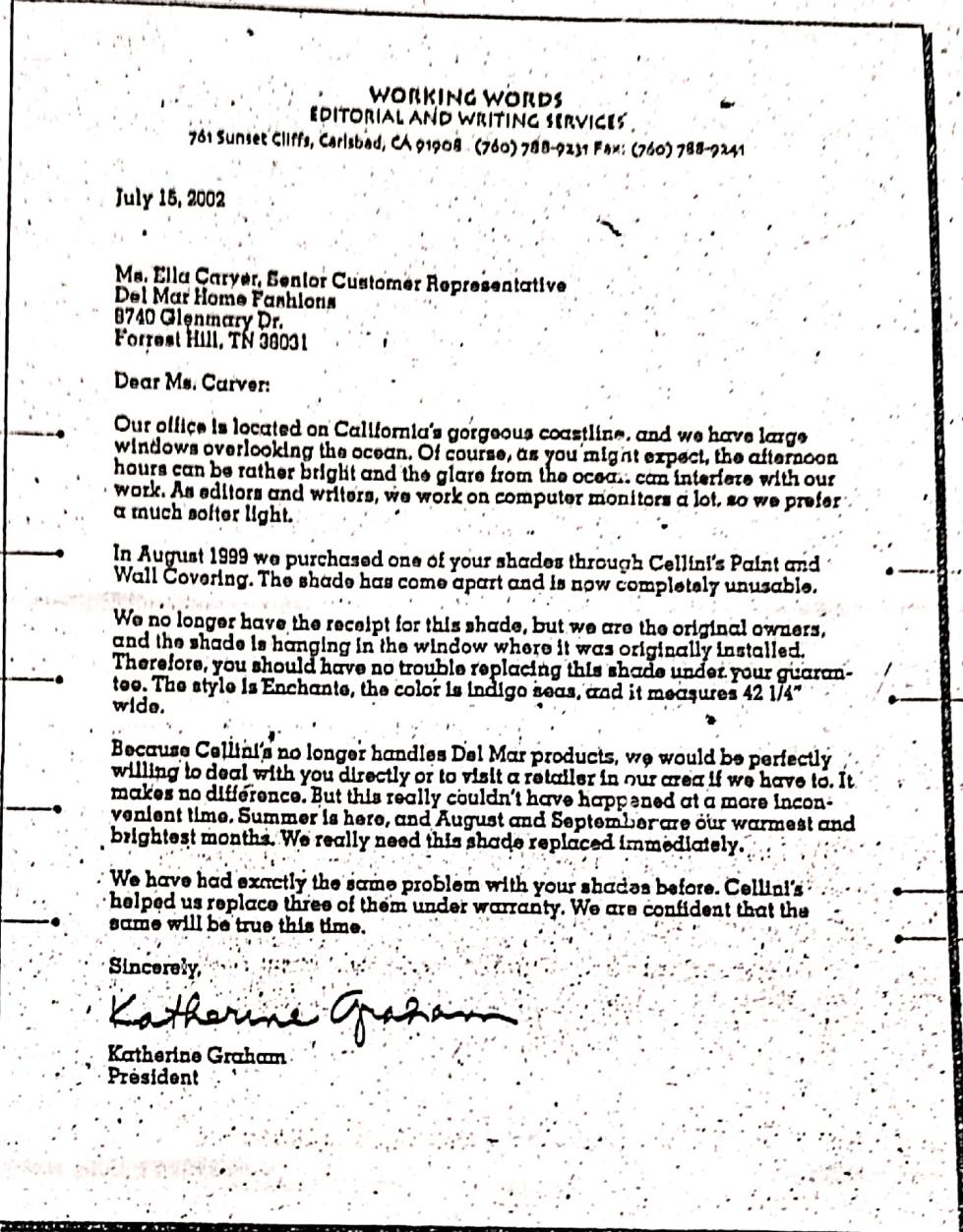
4. Emphasize your goal of having the adjustment granted.

5. Present your case in a calm, logical manner.
6. Tell the audience how you feel; your disappointment with the products, policies, or services provided may well be the most important part of your argument.

C. Action

1. Make sure the action request is a logical conclusion based on the problem and the stated facts.
2. State the request specifically and confidently.
3. Specify a due date for action (when desirable).
4. State the main audience benefit as a reminder of benefits in earlier statements.

FIGURE 9.5 In-Depth Critique: Ineffective Letter Making a Persuasive Claim



ferences, sales and fundraising messages are quite similar: Both compete for their audience's attention, time, and dollars.¹⁸ Both attempt to persuade readers to spend their time or money on the value being offered—whether that value is the convenience of a more efficient vacuum cleaner or the satisfaction of helping save children's lives. Both require a few more steps than other types of persuasive messages, and both generally use the AIDA sequence to deliver their message.

Strategies for Sales Messages

Your purpose in writing a sales message is to sell a product. One of the first things to do is gain a thorough understanding of that product. What does it look like? How does it work? How is it priced? Are there any discounts? How is it packaged? How is it delivered?

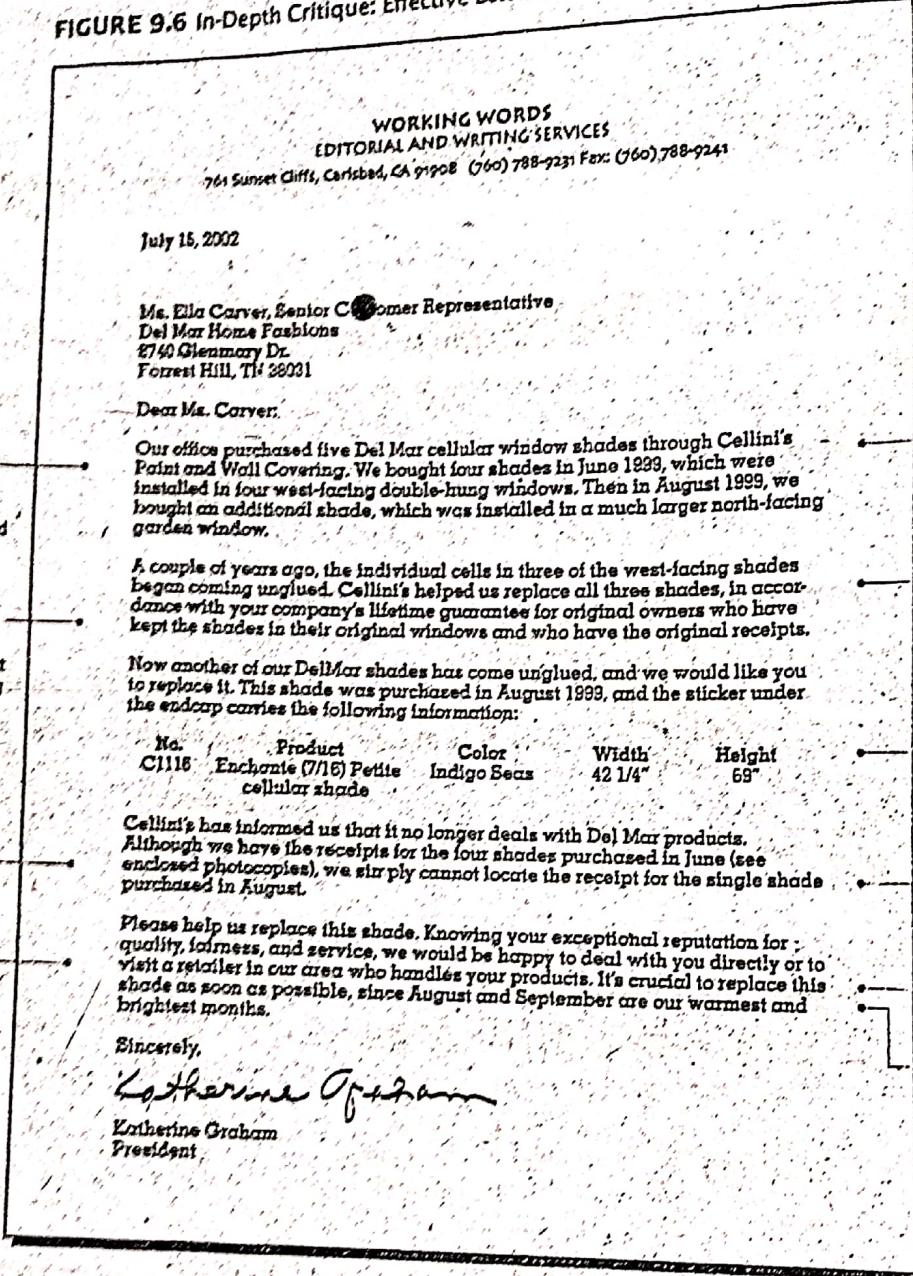
You'll also need to think about the type of sales campaign you'll conduct. Will you send a letter only, or will you include brochures, samples, response cards, and the like? If you send a brochure, how many pages will it run? Will you conduct a multistage

Sales and fundraising messages compete for readers' attention, time, and dollars.

When planning a sales message, know your product.

Before writing your sales message, decide what sort of campaign you'll conduct.

FIGURE 9.6 In-Depth Critique: Effective Letter Making a Persuasive Claim



campaign, with several mailings and some sort of telephone or in-person follow-up? Or will you rely on a single hard-hitting mailing? Expensive items and hard-to-accept propositions call for a more elaborate campaign than low-cost products and simple actions. All these decisions depend on the audience you're trying to reach—their characteristics and their likely acceptance of or resistance to your message. You must analyze your audience and focus on their needs, interests, and emotional concerns—just as you would for any persuasive message. Try to form a mental image of the typical buyer for the product you wish to sell. But besides the usual questions, also ask yourself: What might audience members want to know about this product? How can your product help them? Are they driven by bottom-line pricing, or is quality more important to them?

Determining Selling Points and Benefits

Sales letters require you to know your product's selling points and how each one benefits your particular audience. You'll need to highlight these points when you compose your persuasive message. For example, at AT&T's Language Line Services, Jeanne

In order to make campaign decisions, you need to know your audience.

TABLE 9.2 Features Versus Benefits

Product Feature (Selling Point)	Consumer Benefit
No money down, no interest payments for 24 months.	You can buy what you want right now at no additional costs.
This printer prints 17 pages a minute.	This printer can turn out one of your 100-page proposals in six minutes.
Our shelter provides 100 adult beds and 50 children's beds for the needy.	Your donation will provide temporary housing for 100 women who don't want to return to abusive husbands.
Your corporate sponsorship of the seminar will pay for the keynote speaker's travel and lodging.	Your corporate sponsorship of the seminar will allow your site manager a five-minute introduction at the beginning of the program to summarize your services.

Anderson emphasizes the ease and cost-effectiveness of dialing up one of the 140 languages 24 hours a day.

As Table 9.2 shows, selling points are the most attractive features of an idea or product; benefits are the particular advantages that readers will realize from those features. Selling points focus on the product. Benefits focus on the user. For example, if you say that your shovel has "an ergonomically designed handle," you've described a good feature. But to persuade someone to buy that shovel, say "the ergonomically designed handle will reduce your risk of back injury." That's a benefit. For your letter and your overall sales efforts to be successful, your product's distinguishing benefit must correspond to your readers' primary needs or emotional concerns.

Take a look at Figure 9.7. The sales letter for SecureAbel Alarms uses the AIDA plan to persuade students to buy its dorm-room alarm system. The features of the system are that it can be installed with a screwdriver, it has an activator that hooks to your key chain or belt loop, and it has a blinking red light to warn intruders to stay away. The benefits are ease of installation, ease of activation, and a feeling of safety and security—all obtainable without investing in a full-blown permanently installed alarm system. When composing sales messages, be sure to focus on relatively few product benefits. Ultimately, you'll single out one benefit, which will become the hallmark of your campaign. Safety seems to be the key benefit emphasized by SecureAbel Alarms.

Staying Within the Law

Whether you're selling a good, a service, or your company's image, knowing the law can help you avoid serious legal problems (see "Focusing on Ethics: What You May Legally Say in a Sales Letter"). The laws governing sales letters are quite specific:

- Sales letters are considered binding contracts in many states. So avoid even implying offers or promises that you can't deliver.
- Making a false statement in a sales letter is fraud if the recipient can prove that (1) you intended to deceive, (2) you made a statement regarding a fact rather than an opinion or a speculation, (3) the recipient was justified in relying on the statement, and (4) the recipient was damaged by it (in a legal sense). Misrepresenting the price, quality, or performance of a product in a sales letter is fraud. So is a testimonial by a person misrepresented to be an expert.
- Using a person's name, photograph, or other identity in a sales letter without permission constitutes invasion of privacy—with some exceptions. Using a photo of members of a local softball team in a chamber of commerce mailer may be perfectly legal if team members are public figures in the community and if using the

Selling points focus on the product; benefits focus on the user.

For your sales letter to succeed, your product's benefits must match your audience's needs.



Are cookies or direct flights the key selling point of Midwest Express Airlines? Perhaps both. So when Midwest Express sends persuasive sales messages to customers, the company carefully points out how business travelers will benefit from such amenities as wide leather seats, direct routes between small cities, and, of course, the fresh-baked gooey cookies.

You can avoid both legal and ethical pitfalls by being genuinely concerned about your audience's needs, but you must also know the law.

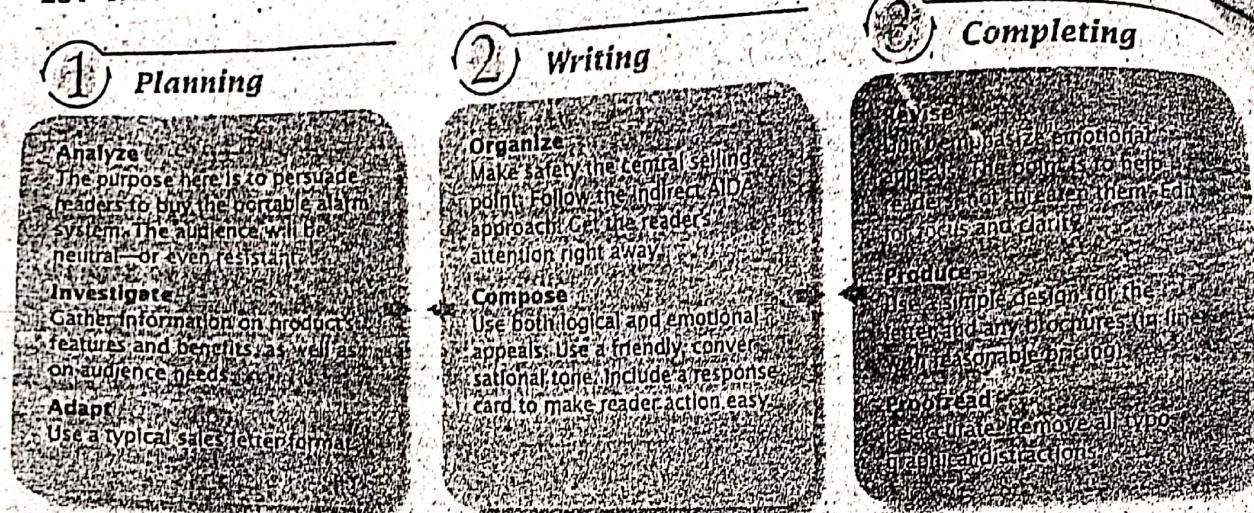
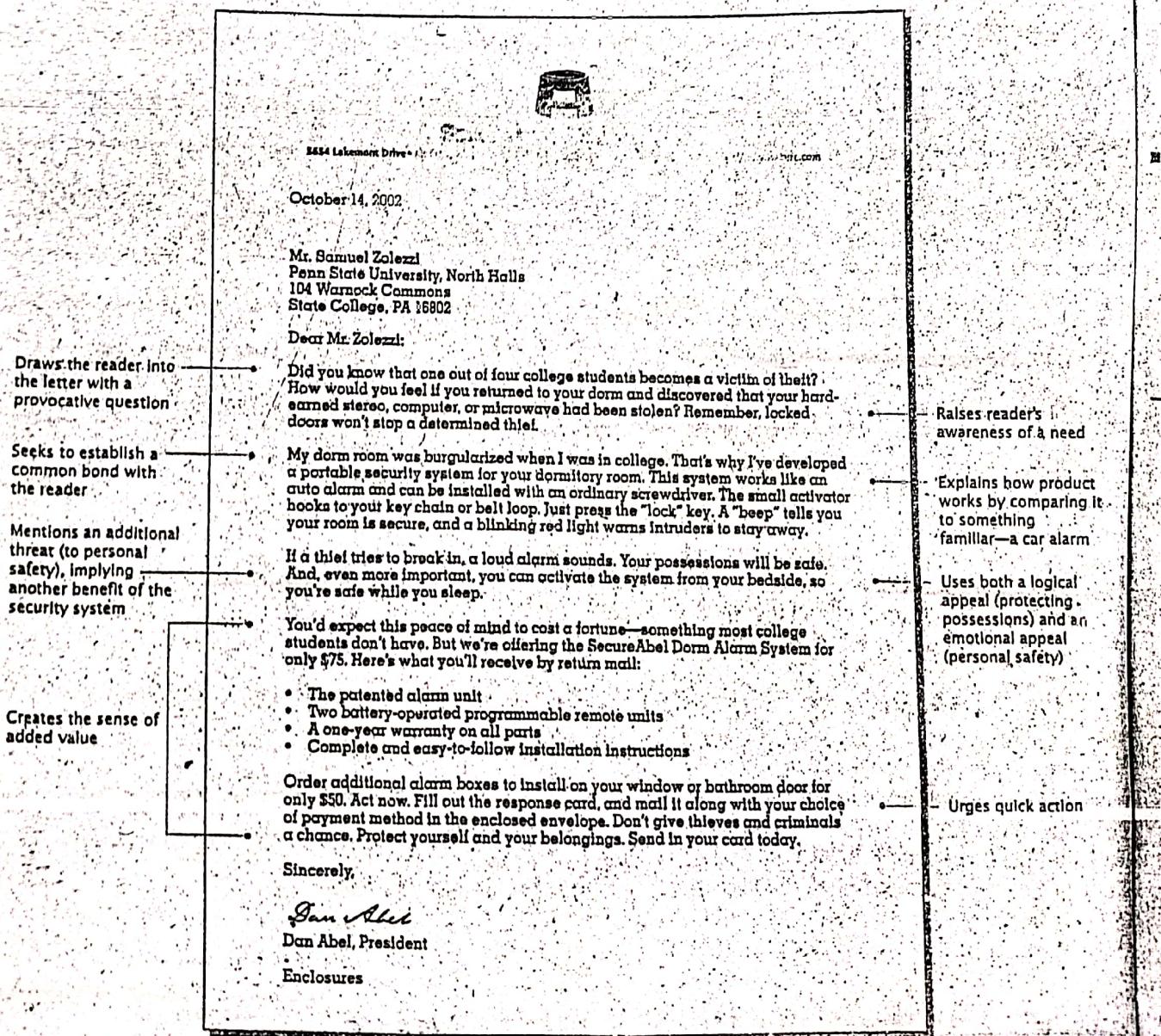


FIGURE 9.7 In-Depth Critique: Letter Selling a Product



Focusing On Ethics

What You May Want to Avoid in a Sales Letter

As you prepare to write your sales letter, think carefully about your choice of words. False statements could land you in court. So make sure your language complies with legal and ethical standards. Your language, letters within the limits of the law, we will also consider.

- "Our product is the best on the market." This statement is acceptable for a sales letter because it also permits you to express an opinion about your product. In the process of merchandising a product, statements of opinion are known as "puffery," which is generally legal as long as you make no deceptive or misleading claims.
- "Our product will serve you well for many years to come." This statement from a sales brochure triggered a lawsuit by a disgruntled customer who claimed the manufacturer's product lasted only a few years. The courts ruled that the statement was an exaggeration because the manufacturer had promised that the product would last for a specific number of years.
- "We're so confident you'll enjoy our merchandise that we've enclosed a sample of our most popular line. This sample can be yours for only \$5.00! Please send your payment in the enclosed, prepaid envelope. If you decide not to keep the merchandise without paying, you may return it. Under the law, consumers may consider informal requests for gifts. They are not obligated to return items if you've submitted payments for unsolicited merchandise."

Thousands of high school students—just like you—are already enjoying this fantastic CD collection! Order before March 1 and save!" If your sales letter appeals to minors, you are legally obligated to honor their contracts. At the same time, however, the law permits minors to cancel their contracts and return the merchandise to you. Sellers are legally obligated to accept contracts voided by minors and any goods returned by them. Legal adult status is defined differently from state to state, ranging from age 18 to age 21.

- "You'll find hundreds of bargains at our annual 'scratch and dent' sale! All sales are final on merchandise marked 'as is.'" When you use the term *as is* in your sales letter, you are not misleading customers about the quality of your products. By warning consumers that the condition of sales items is less than perfect, you are not legally obligated to issue refunds to customers who complain about defects later on.

Career Application

1. Review two sales letters for content. List the "puffery" statements in each letter.
2. Note any statements in these sales letters that appear questionable to you. Rewrite one of the statements, carefully choosing words that won't be misleading to consumers.

photo doesn't falsely imply their endorsement. On the other hand, using a photo of your governor, without consent, on a letter about the profits to be made in worm farming could be deemed an invasion of privacy.

- Publicizing a person's private life in a sales letter can also result in legal problems. Stating that the president of a local bank (mentioned by name) served six months in prison for income tax evasion is a potentially damaging fact that may be considered an invasion of privacy. You would also risk a lawsuit by publicizing another person's past-due debts or by publishing without consent another person's medical records, x-rays, or photographs.

As with other persuasive messages, following the letter of the law isn't always enough. You'll also want to write sales letters of the highest ethical character. One way to do so is to focus on solving your reader's problem rather than selling your product. When you're genuinely concerned about your audience's needs and interests, you'll find it easier to avoid legal or ethical pitfalls.

To keep your sales letters ethical, focus on your reader's problem rather than selling your product.

Using the AIDA Plan in Sales Messages

Most sales letters are prepared according to the AIDA plan. You begin with an attention-getting device, generate interest by describing some of the product's unique features, increase the desire for your product by highlighting the benefits that are most appealing to your audience, and close by suggesting the action you want the audience to take.

Certain tried-and-true attention-getting devices are used in sales letters for a wide variety of products.

Getting Attention Like other persuasive messages, sales letters start with an attention-getting device; however, the emphasis of the attention phase is slightly different. Sales-letter professionals use some common techniques to attract their audience's attention. One popular technique is opening with a provocative question. Look closely at the following three examples. Which seems most interesting to you?

How would you like straight A's this semester?

Get straight A's this semester!

Now you can get straight A's this semester, with . . .

If you're like most people, you'll find the first option the most enticing. The question invites your response—a positive response designed to encourage you to read on. The second option is fairly interesting too, but its commanding tone may make you wary of the claim. The third option is acceptable; but it certainly conveys no sense of excitement. Its quick introduction of the product may lead you to a snap decision against reading further. Other techniques can also help you open your sales letters with excitement. You can grab your audience's attention by emphasizing

- A piece of genuine news. "In the past 60 days, mortgage rates have fallen to a 30-year low."
- A personal appeal to the reader's emotions and values. "The only thing worse than paying taxes is paying taxes when you don't have to."
- Your product's most attractive feature along with the associated benefit. "New control device ends problems with employee pilferage!"
- An intriguing number. "Here are three great secrets of the world's most-loved entertainers."
- A sample of the product. "Here's your free sample of the new Romalite packing sheet."
- A concrete illustration with story appeal. "In 1985, Earl Colbert set out to find a better way to process credit applications. After 10 years of trial and error, he finally developed a procedure so simple and yet thorough that he was cited for service to the industry by the American Creditors Association."
- A specific trait shared by the audience. "Busy executives need another complicated 'time-saving' device like they need a hole in the head!"
- A challenge. "Don't waste another day wondering how you're going to become the success you've always wanted to be!"
- A solution to a problem. "Tired of arctic air rushing through the cracks around your windows? Stay warm and save energy with StormSeal Weather-stripping."

Look at your own mail to see how many sales messages use these few techniques. Such attention-getting devices will give your sales letters added impact. Look back at Figure 9.7 for a typical example.

Sales-message professionals know that textual openings aren't the only way to get attention. In ads and catalogs, companies capture attention and heighten emotional desire by using a variety of formatting devices. You can grab your audience by using special sizes or styles of type, underlining, bullets, color, indentations, and so on. Even so, not all attention-getting devices are equally effective, and using too many can have the reverse effect. In short, the best attention-getter is the one that makes your audience read the rest of your message.

Choose an attention-getter that encourages the reader to read more.

To determine your product's central selling point, ask:

- What does the competition offer?
- What is special about my product?
- What are potential buyers really looking for?

Building Interest In the interest section of your message, highlight your product's key selling point. Say that your company's alarm device is relatively inexpensive, durable, and tamperproof. Although these are all attractive features, you want to focus on only one. Ask what the competition has to offer, what most distinguishes your product, and what most concerns potential buyers. The answers to these questions will help you select the central selling point, the single point around which to build your sales

message. Build your audience's interest by highlighting this point, and make it stand out through typography, design, or high-impact writing.¹⁹

Determining the central selling point will also help you define the benefits to potential buyers. Perhaps your company built its new alarm to overcome competing products' susceptibility to tampering. Being tamperproof is the feature you choose as your central selling point, and its benefit to readers is that burglars won't be able to break in so easily.

Increasing Desire. In the desire section, mention your main benefit repeatedly, expanding and explaining as you go. Use both words and pictures, if possible. This main benefit is what will entice recipients to read on and take further action.

As you continue to stress your main benefit, weave in references to other benefits. ("You can get this worry-free protection for much less than you might think," and "The same technology that makes it difficult for burglars to crack your alarm system makes the device durable, even when it must be exposed to the elements.") Remember, sales letters reflect the "you" attitude through references to benefits, so always phrase the selling points in terms of what your product's features can do for potential customers.

Keep in mind that most readers are pressed for time and are interested only in what matters most to them.²⁰ Therefore, refrain from providing every last detail as you explain product benefits. The best letters are short (preferably one but no more than two pages) and use bullet points to highlight important benefits. They include enough detail to spur the reader's interest, but they don't try to be the sole source of information. And to keep readers interested, they use action terms, talk about price, and support any claims.

Using Action Terms. Action words give strength to any business message, but they are especially important in sales letters. Compare the following:

Instead of This

The NuForm desk chair is designed to support your lower back and relieve pressure on your legs.

Write This

The NuForm desk chair supports your lower back and relieves pressure on your legs...

The second version says the same thing in fewer words and emphasizes what the chair does for the user ("supports") rather than the intentions of the design team ("is designed to support").

Use colorful verbs and adjectives that convey a dynamic image to keep readers interested. Be careful, however, not to overdo it: "Your factory floors will sparkle like diamonds" is hard to believe and may prevent your audience from believing the rest of your message.

Talking About Price. The price that people are willing to pay for a product depends on several factors: the prices of similar products, the general state of the economy, and the psychology of the buyer. Price is a complicated issue and often a sensitive one. So you need to be careful whenever you talk about price in your sales messages.

Whether you highlight or downplay the price of your product, prepare your readers for it. Words such as *luxurious* and *economical* provide unmistakable clues about how your price compares with that of competitors. Such words help your readers accept your price when you finally state it. Here's an example from a sales letter offering a product at a bargain price:



With a \$10,000 loan and a cargo of beachware ordered from a trade show in California, Joni Boldt Ridgway and Kyrle Boldt created "Splash"—five Splashes actually—in St. Louis. The owners know that producing effective sales messages is just as important to the stores' success as the creative merchandise they stock—some 70 kinds of snowboards, fluorescent bikinis, and lime-green nail polish. Both must get the customer's attention, build interest, increase desire, and motivate action.

To increase desire, expand your main benefit while adding others.

- Use action terms
- Use colorful verbs and adjectives

You can prepare readers for your product's price by subtle choice and arrangement of words.

If the price is an attractive feature, emphasize it by displaying it prominently.

- To de-emphasize price
 - Bury actual figures in the middle of a paragraph near the end
 - Mention benefits and favorable money matters before the actual price
 - Break a quantity price into units
 - Compare the price with the cost of some other product or activity

Emphasizes the rarity of the edition to signal value and thus prepare the reader for the big-ticket price that follows.

Buries the actual price in the middle of a sentence and ties it in with another reminder of the exclusivity of the offer

Types of support for product claims:

- Samples
- Brochures
- Examples
- Testimonials
- Statistics
- Guarantees

Aim to get the reader to act as soon as possible.

All the Features of Name-Brand
Why pay for fancy packaging or for that little tag with a famous name? Enjoy cotton lining, reinforced toes, and matchless durability for only \$1.50.

In this excerpt the price falls right at the end of the paragraph, where it stands out. In addition, the price issue is featured in a bold headline. This technique may even be used as the opening of a letter, if (1) the price is the most important feature and (2) the audience for the letter is value-conscious.

If price is not a major selling point, you can handle it in several ways. You could leave the price out altogether or mention it only in an accompanying brochure. You could de-emphasize the price by putting the actual figures in the middle of a paragraph that comes close to the end of your sales letter, well after you've presented the benefits and selling points.

Only 100 prints of this exclusive, limited-edition lithograph will be created. On June 15, they will be made available to the general public, but you can reserve one now for only \$350, the special advance reservation price. Simply rush the enclosed reservation card back today so that your order is in before the June 15 publication date.

The pros also use two other techniques for minimizing price. One technique is to break a quantity price into units. Instead of saying that a case of wine costs \$144, you might say that each bottle costs \$12. The other technique is to compare your product's price with the cost of some other product or activity: "The cost of owning your own exercise equipment is less than you'd pay for a health-club membership." Your aim is to make the cost seem as small and affordable as possible, thereby eliminating price as a possible objection.

Supporting Your Claims: Providing support for your claims boosts your credibility and increases desire for your product. You can't assume that people will believe what you say about your product just because you've said it in writing. You'll have to prove your claims. Support is especially important if your product is complicated, costs a lot, or represents some unusual approach.

Support for your claims may take several forms. Samples and brochures, often with photographs, are enclosed in a sales package and are referred to in the letter. The letter also describes or typographically highlights examples of how the product has benefited others. It includes testimonials (quotations from satisfied customers) or cites statistics from scientific studies of the product's performance. Guarantees of exchange or return privileges may be woven into the letter or set off in a special way, indicating that you have faith in your product and are willing to back it up.

It's almost impossible to provide too much support. Try to anticipate every question your audience may want to ask. Put yourself in your audience's place so that you can discover and solve all the "what if" scenarios.²¹

Motivating Action: After you have raised enough interest and built the reader's desire for your product, you'll want to clearly explain how to take the next step. After all, the overriding purpose of a sales letter is to get your reader to do something. Many consumer products sold through the mail simply ask for a check—in other words, an immediate decision to buy. On the other hand, companies selling big-ticket and more complex items frequently ask for just a small step toward the final buying decision, such as sending for more information or authorizing a call by a sales representative.

Whatever you ask readers to do, try to persuade them to do it right away. Convince them that they must act now, perhaps to guarantee a specific delivery date. If there's no particular reason to act quickly, many sales letters offer discounts for orders placed by a certain date or prizes or special offers to, say, the first 500 people to respond. Others suggest that purchases be charged to a credit card or be paid off over

time. Still others offer a free trial, an unconditional guarantee, or a no-strings request card for information—all in an effort to overcome readers' natural inertia.

Of course, adding a postscript (P.S.) is one of the most effective ways to boost audience response. This is the place to make your final impression, so be sure the information is noteworthy. Use the P.S. to reiterate your primary benefit, make an additional offer, or compel the reader to act quickly by emphasizing a deadline.²²

Finally, use good judgment when distributing your messages to would-be customers. Do not send electronic junk mail (spam). Doing so only irritates consumers, and it can be illegal, depending on the state in which you reside. Laws against spam on the federal level are pending.

Strategies for Fundraising Messages

Motivating action is a challenge for the best sales letters. Even more of a challenge is motivating action when you're trying to raise funds. Most of the techniques used to write sales letters can also be used to write fundraising letters, as long as your techniques match your audience, your goals, and the cause or organization you're representing. Be careful to establish value in the minds of your donors. Above all, don't forget to include the "what's in it for me?" information—for example, telling your readers how good they'll feel by making a donation.²³

To make sure that your fundraising letters outshine the competition's letters, take some time to get ready before you actually begin writing.²⁴ You can begin by reading the mail you receive from donors. Learn as much as you can about your audience by noting the tone of these letters, the language used, and the concerns raised. This exercise will help you write letters that donors will both understand and relate to.

You might also keep a file of competing fundraising letters. Study these samples to find out what other fundraisers are doing and what new approaches they're taking. Most important, find out what works and what doesn't. Then you can continue with your other research efforts, such as conducting interviews, holding focus groups, and reading trade journals to find out what people are concerned about, what they're interested in, and what gets their attention.

Finally, before you start writing, know whose benefits to emphasize. Make a two-column list; on one side list what your organization does, and on the other side list what your donors want. You'll discover that the two columns are quite different. Make sure that the benefits you emphasize are related to what your donors want, not to what your organization does. Then you can work on stating those donor benefits in specific detail. For example: "Your donation of \$100 will provide 15 people with a Christmas dinner."

Fundraising letters use many of the same techniques that are used in sales letters.

Be sure to focus on the concerns of your readers, not on the concerns of your organization.

Human interest stories are the best way to interest your readers in fundraising letters.

Personalizing Fundraising Messages

Because fundraising letters depend so heavily on emotional appeals, keep your message personal. A natural, real-life lead-in is usually the best. People seem to respond best to slice-of-life stories. Storytelling is perfect when your narrative is unforced and goes straight to the heart of the matter.²⁵ Professional fundraiser Conrad Squires advises you to "find and use relevant human-interest stories," to "show donors the faces of the people they are helping," and to "make the act of sending a contribution as real and memorable and personal" as you can.²⁶ Such techniques make people feel the warmth of other lives.²⁷

So that your letters remain personal, immediate, and effective, steer clear of three common mistakes:²⁸

- Letting your letter sound like a business communication of any kind
- Wasting space on warm-up (the things you write while you're working up to your real argument)
- Assuming that the goals of your organization are more important than your readers' concerns (a deadly mistake)

Personalize fundraising letters by

- Writing about your readers
- Helping your readers identify with recipients

The last caution is crucial when writing fundraising letters! Squires suggests that "the more space you spend writing about the reader, the better response you're likely to get."²⁹ Here are some examples:

You've proven you are somebody who really cares about what happens to children, Mr. Jones.

Ms. Smith, your company's kindness can change the world for Meta Singh and his family.

It's also up to you to help your donors identify with recipients. A busy company executive may not be able to identify with the homeless man she passes on the street every day. But every human being understands pain; we've all felt it. So do your best to portray that homeless man's pain using words that the busy executive can understand.³⁰

Learning Objective 6

List eight guidelines that will help you strengthen your fundraising messages

Strong fundraising letters

- Explain a specific need thoroughly
- Show how important it is for readers to help
- Spell out exactly what amount of help is being requested
- Describe in detail the benefits of helping

Strengthening Fundraising Messages

The best fundraising letters do four things: (1) thoroughly explain a specific need, (2) show how important it is for readers to help, (3) spell out exactly what amount of help is being requested, and (4) describe in detail the benefits of helping.³¹ To help you accomplish these four major tasks, here are some fundraising guidelines:³²

- Interest your readers immediately. If you don't catch your readers' interest at the absolute beginning of your letter, you never will.
- Use simple language. Tell your story with simple, warm, and personal language. Nothing else is as effective in getting people to empathize.
- Give readers an opportunity to accomplish something important. Donors want to feel needed. They want the excitement of coming to your rescue.
- Make it hard to say no. Make the need so urgent and strong that your readers will find it difficult to turn you down. "Won't you send a gift now, knowing that children's lives are on the line?"
- Make your needs clear. Leave no doubt about the amount of money that you want. Be absolutely clear, and be sure the amount requested is appropriate for your audience. Explain why the money is needed as soon as possible. Also, make it extremely easy to respond by asking for a small gift.
- Write no longer than you have to. If you use a telegram-type format, keep your message short. However, longer messages are usually best for fundraising. Just keep sentences and paragraphs short, maximize content, and minimize wordiness.
- Make your reply form complete and thorough. Include all the basics: your name, address, and telephone number; a restatement of your request and the gift amount; your donor's name and address (or space enough for a label); information on how to make out the check; and information on tax deductibility.
- Use interesting enclosures. Enclosures that simply give more information will decrease returns. Instead, use enclosures that are fun or that give the donor something to do, sign, return, or keep.

These guidelines should help you reach the humanity and compassion of your readers by focusing on specific reader benefits, detailing the unique need, emphasizing the urgency of the situation, and spelling out the exact help needed. As director of PETsMART Charities, Rita Gomez has the task of raising millions of dollars to help save the lives of and find families for thousands upon thousands of homeless pets. Her letter, in Figure 9.8, makes a compelling case for donations.

Like sales letters, fundraising letters are simply particular types of persuasive messages. Both categories have their unique requirements, some of which only professional writers can master. (See this chapter's "Checklist: Composing Sales and Fundraising Letters" as a reminder of the tasks involved in writing these messages.)

FIGURE 9.8 In-Depth Critique: Letter to Raise Funds

PETSMART
Where pets are family™

19501 North 27th Avenue • Phoenix, Arizona 85027 • 623•580•8100

June 17, 2002

Mr. William Hanover, President
Hanover, Jude, and Larson
12785 Sunnyslope Dr.
Phoenix, AZ 85020

Dear Mr. Hanover:

Ernie needs your help.

Gains attention by personalizing the message with a real-life story

Increases Interest by providing hard (even painful) numbers and details of just what PETSMART Charities does

Creates a desire to be involved by sharing specific successes of the program

Makes the request by stating the benefits of the reader's donation to others as well as to the reader

Closes by echoing the real-life story that opened the message and repeating the request for specific action

Includes a photo to further personalize the message and strengthen the emotional appeal

Avoids sounding like a business communication while getting right to the point

Uses a carefully constructed transition to move reader from what PETSMART has done to what the reader can do

Takes special pains to focus on the reader and his company

Reply form is complete and thorough

Ernie deserves a loving home. When Sheila Jenkins found him in the alley behind her apartment, the poor little guy was weak from hunger, infested with fleas, and dragging a broken leg. Under skillful care of the local animal shelter, Ernie recovered fully and won the hearts of all with his indomitable spirit, his quick intelligence, and his perky devotion.

Ernie has been waiting patiently for a family to love, but sometimes homes are hard to find. More than 7 million pets are euthanized every year, simply because they have no family or home to call their own. So in 1992 PETSMART decided not to sell cats and dogs. Instead, the company created PETSMART Charities Adoption Centers—in-store spaces that is donated to help local animal welfare organizations make homeless pets available for adoption.

Over the past decade, PETSMART Charities has donated \$15 million to animal welfare programs, and through our in-store adoption programs, we've helped save the lives of more than 1 million pets, one by one. These accomplishments are the result of devotion, hard work, and contributions from our own associates and from companies like yours. That's right, we haven't done all this alone. And to continue saving lives, we need your help more than ever.

Mr. Hanover, you and your associates have proved that you care about your community. You know business is about more than merely selling a product or service. Now, with a one-time donation of \$100, your company can save the lives of many faithful pet companions. With a yearly or a scheduled monthly donation, you can do even more to rescue these loving family members. Your gift saves lives, makes you feel great, and strengthens your firm's reputation as a caring and responsible company.

Please help Ernie find a good home. Just fill out the enclosed reply form and send it along with your donation in the envelope provided. Ernie can't make it without you, and neither can we.

Sincerely,

Rita E. Gomez

Rita E. Gomez
Director

Enclosure

TO HELP PETSMART CHARITIES SAVE LIVES

(company)
(address)

WISHLIST TO DONATE

\$100 By check (enclosed)
 \$ _____ each year By credit card:
 \$ _____ a month (for 12 mos.) Visa Mastercard Discover
Card no.:
Signature:
Position:

✓ CHECKLIST: COMPOSING SALES AND FUNDRAISING LETTERS

A. Attention

1. Design a positive opening that awakens a favorable association with the product, need, or cause.
2. Write the opening so that it's appropriate, fresh, honest, interesting, specific, and relevant.
3. Promise a benefit to the reader.
4. Keep the first paragraph short, preferably two to five lines, and sometimes only one.
5. For sales letters, get attention with a provocative question, a significant/startling fact, a solution to a problem, a special offer/gift, a testimonial, a current event, an illustration, a comparison, an event in the reader's life, a problem the reader may face, or a quotation.
6. For fundraising letters, design an attention-getter that uses a human-interest story.

B. Interest

1. State information clearly, vividly, and persuasively, relating it to the reader's concerns.
2. Develop the central selling point.
3. Feature the product or charitable need in two ways: physical description and reader benefits.
4. Place benefits first, or interweave them with a physical description.
5. Describe objective details of the need or product (size, shape, color, scent, sound, texture, etc.).
6. Use psychological appeals to present the sensation, satisfaction, or pleasure readers will gain.
7. Blend cold facts with warm feelings.

C. Desire

1. Enlist one or more appeals to support the central idea (selling point or fundraising goal).
2. If the product is valued mainly because of its appearance, describe its physical details.
3. If the product is machinery or technical equipment, describe its sturdy construction, fine crafting, and other technical details in terms that help readers visualize themselves using it.

4. Include technical sketches and meaningful pictures, charts, and graphs, if necessary.
5. For sales letters, provide test results from recognized experts, laboratories, or authoritative agencies.
6. To raise funds, detail how donations are spent, using recognized accounting/auditing firms.
7. To elicit donations, use strong visual details, good narrative, active verbs, and limited adjectives.
8. Emphasize reader benefits.
9. Anticipate and answer the reader's questions.
10. Use an appropriate form of proof.
11. Include verifiable reports/statistics about users' experience with the product or organization.
12. Provide names (with permission only) of satisfied buyers, users, or donors.
13. Present unexaggerated testimonials from persons whose judgment readers respect.
14. In sales letters, offer a free trial or a guarantee, and refer to samples if they are included.
15. Note any enclosures in conjunction with a selling point or a reader benefit.

D. Action

1. Clearly state the action you desire.
2. Provide specific details on how to order the product, donate money, or reach your organization.
3. Ease action with reply cards, preaddressed envelopes, phone numbers, follow-up phone calls.
4. Offer a special inducement to act now: time limit or situation urgency, special price for a limited time, premium for acting before a certain date, gift for acting, free trial, no obligation to buy with more information or demonstration, easy payments with no money down, credit-card payments.
5. Supply a final reader benefit.
6. In a postscript, convey important donation information or an important sales point (if desired).

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT AT&T'S LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES

 The word about AT&T's Language Line Services has spread quickly among hospitals, police departments, city agencies, and businesses looking to expand into overseas markets. Jeanne Anderson's sales and marketing department is busy prospecting for new subscribers, and her staff keeps growing and growing. Anderson has her hands full, and she recently began delegating some of her responsibilities to keep up with the work load.

Individual Challenge: Every December, the sales and marketing department hosts a Holiday Open House Toy and Food Drive for all Language Line employees. Anderson sees the event as a way of bringing old and new members of her

department closer together and of helping local charity organizations. But she realizes it's going to take a little persuasion to get her staff to participate; the holidays are a busy time for everyone, and this affair is strictly voluntary. Moreover, she's asking them, as they do every year, to bring finger food and desserts for a potluck buffet, plus a new toy or canned food to donate to the needy. The party will last from 2:00 to 4:00, with music, talk, and maybe even a little dancing.

Anderson has asked you to write a memo to the staff serving more as a persuasive request for action than as an invitation to a party. She hopes staff members will decide to attend, will bring a toy or food gift, and will contact La and Judy (party organizers) to let them know what potluck

dish to expect. (Make up any other names or details you need in order to write a convincing memo.)

Team Challenge! Language Line Services became so popular so quickly among certain industries that Anderson has had little time to brainstorm ideas about applications for new markets. She has asked your group to help out sooner or later. AT&T's current markets will be saturated; before that happens, Anderson wants her staff ready to target new industries. This goal will require special sales training and new sales literature targeted to each industry—which means she'll need a budget increase.

First, she has asked you to brainstorm ways Language Line Services might be used by government agencies, ser-

vices organizations, or any untapped industry you can identify. List the applications and benefits for each industry, then decide which three sound most promising. Anderson wants you to write a persuasive memo to convince upper management that these three markets are so promising that the added expenditures for staff training and industry-specific sales literature will bring profitable returns. She's going to ask for a \$50,000 total budget increase to start the three-industry campaign. "Don't worry about financial justification; I'll supply a detailed budget breakdown as an attachment to the memo," she tells you. "You just need to convince them this is an idea they can't refuse."¹³

SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Discuss the planning tasks that need extra attention when preparing persuasive messages. Because persuasive messages can be complicated and sensitive, several planning tasks need extra attention. You'll be persuading people to take action that they probably wouldn't have taken without your message, so analyzing your purpose is crucial. In addition, audience analysis may be more detailed for persuasive messages, gauging psychological and social needs in addition to cultural differences. Also, when persuading a skeptical audience, your credibility must be unquestionable, so you may need to spend some extra effort to establish it. Since your attempts to persuade could be viewed by some as manipulative, you need to strive for the highest ethical standards.
- 2 Describe the AIDA plan for persuasive messages. When using the AIDA plan, you open your message by getting attention with a reader benefit, a problem, a stimulating question, a piece of news, or an unexpected statement. You build interest with facts, details, and additional reader benefits. You increase desire by providing more evidence and reader benefits and by anticipating and answering possible objections. You conclude by motivating a specific action, emphasizing the positive results of that action, and making it easy for the reader to respond.
- 3 Distinguish between emotional and logical appeals, and discuss how to balance them. Emotional appeals call on human feelings, using arguments that are based on audience needs or sympathies. However, these appeals aren't effective by themselves. Logical appeals call on human reason (whether using analogy, induction, or deduction). If you're careful to avoid faulty logic, you can use logic together with emotion, thereby supplying rational support for an idea that readers have already embraced emotionally.
- 4 Explain the best way to overcome resistance to your persuasive message, and list four common mistakes in writing persuasive messages. The best way to overcome resistance is to think of all the objections your audience could possibly have and then explain the pros and cons of all sides. Provide solutions to all the problems your audience might perceive. In addition, make sure you do not (1) use an up-front hard sell, (2) rule out compromise, (3) rely solely on great arguments while ignoring how you present them, and (4) assume your persuasive attempt is a one-time effort.
- 5 Compare sales messages with fundraising messages. Sales messages are used by for-profit companies to persuade readers to make a purchase for themselves. In contrast, fundraising messages are used by nonprofit organizations to persuade readers to donate their time or their money to help others. However, these two types of persuasive messages have a lot in common. Primarily, they both try to persuade readers to "buy" (with time or money) the value that is being offered (the product or the cause). In addition, both types of persuasive messages generally use the AIDA plan.
- 6 List eight guidelines that will help you strengthen your fundraising messages. To strengthen your fundraising messages, follow these guidelines: (1) interest your readers immediately, (2) use simple language, (3) give your readers the chance to do something important, (4) make it hard to say no, (5) make your needs clear, (6) write no longer than you have to, (7) make a reply form complete and thorough, (8) use interesting enclosures.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- What are some questions to ask when gauging the audience's needs during the planning of a persuasive message?
- What role do demographics and psychographics play in audience analysis during the planning of a persuasive message?
- What are four of the ways you can build credibility with an audience when planning a persuasive message?
- What is the AIDA plan, and how does it apply to persuasive messages?
- How do emotional appeals differ from logical appeals?
- What three types of reasoning can you use in logical appeals?
- How can semantics affect a persuasive message?
- What are four common mistakes to avoid when developing a persuasive message to overcome resistance?
- What are the similarities and differences between sales messages and fundraising messages?
- How do benefits differ from features?

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- Why is it important to present both sides of an argument when writing a persuasive message to a potentially hostile audience?
- How are persuasive messages different from routine messages?
- When is it appropriate to use the direct organizational approach in persuasive messages?
- As an employee, how many of your daily tasks require persuasion? List as many as you can think of. Who are your audiences, and how do their needs and characteristics affect the way you develop your persuasive messages at work?
- Ethical Choices Are emotional appeals ethical? Why or why not?

PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Documents for Analysis

Read the following documents, then (1) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each sentence and (2) revise each document so that it follows this chapter's guidelines.

Document 9.A: Writing Persuasive Requests for Action

At Tolson Auto Repair, we have been in business for over 25 years. We stay in business by always taking into account what the customer wants. That's why we are writing. We want to know your opinions to be able to better conduct our business.

Take a moment right now and fill out the enclosed questionnaire. We know everyone is busy, but this is just one way we have of making sure our people do their job correctly. Use the enclosed envelope to return the questionnaire.

And again, we're happy you chose Tolson Auto Repair. We want to take care of all your auto needs.

Document 9.B: Writing Persuasive Claims and Requests for Adjustment

Dear Gateway:

I'm writing to you because of my disappointment with my new TelePath x2 Faxmodem. The modem works all right, but the volume is set too high and the volume knob doesn't turn it down. It's driving us crazy. The volume knob doesn't seem to be connected to anything but simply spins around. I can't believe you would put out a product like this without testing it first.

I depend on the modem to run my small business and want to know what you are going to do about it. This reminds me of every time I buy electronic equipment from what seems like any company. Something is always wrong. I thought quality was supposed to be important, but I guess not.

Anyway, I need this fixed right away. Please tell me what you want me to do:

Document 9.C: Writing Sales and Fundraising Letters

We know how awful dining hall food can be, and that's why we've developed the "Mealaweeek Club." Once a week, we'll deliver food to your dormitory or apartment. Our meals taste great. We have pizza, buffalo wings, hamburgers and curly fries, veggie roll-ups, and more!

When you sign up for just six months, we will ask what day you want your delivery. We'll ask you to fill out your selection of meals. And the rest is up to us. At "Mealaweeek," we deliver! And payment is easy. We accept MasterCard and VISA or a personal check. It will save money especially when compared with eating out.

Just fill out the enclosed card and indicate your method of payment. As soon as we approve your credit or check, we'll begin delivery. Tell all your friends about Mealaweeek. We're the best idea since sliced bread!

Exercises

For live links to all websites discussed in this chapter, visit this text's website at www.prenhall.com/boeve. Just log on, select Chapter 9, and click on "Student Resources." Locate the name of the site or the URL related to the material in the text. For the "Exploring the Best of the Web" exercises, you'll also find navigational directions. Click on the live link to the site.

9.1 Teamwork With another student, analyze the persuasive memo at Host Marriott (Figure 9.3 on page 272) by answering the following questions:

- What techniques are used to capture the reader's attention?
- Does the writer use the direct or the indirect organizational approach? Why?
- Is the subject line effective? Why or why not?
- Does the writer use an emotional or a logical appeal? Why?
- What reader benefits are included?

5. How does the writer establish credibility?
 6. What tools does the writer use to reinforce his position?
- Composing Subject Lines** Compose effective subject lines for the following persuasive memos:
- A request to your supervisor to purchase a new high-speed laser printer for your office. You've been outsourcing quite a bit of your printing to AlphaGraphics, and you're certain this printer will pay for itself in six months.
 - A direct mailing to area residents soliciting customers for your new business, "Meals à la Cac," a carryout dining service that delivers from most of the local restaurants. All local restaurant menus are on the Internet. Mom and Dad can dine on egg rolls and chow mein while the kids munch on pepperoni pizza.
 - A special request to the company president to allow managers to carry over their unused vacation days to the following year. Apparently, many managers canceled their fourth-quarter vacation plans to work on the installation of a new company computer system. Under their current contract, vacation days not used by December 31 aren't accountable.
- 9.3 **Ethical Choices** Your boss has asked you to draft a memo requesting that everyone in your department donate money to the company's favorite charity, an organization that operates a special summer camp for physically challenged children. You wind up writing a three-page memo packed with facts and heartwarming anecdotes about the camp and the children's experiences. When you must work that hard to persuade your audience to take an action such as donating money to a charity, aren't you being manipulative and unethical? Explain.
- 9.4 **Focusing on Benefits** Determine whether the following sentences focus on features or benefits; rewrite as necessary to focus all the sentences on benefits.
- All-Cook skillets are coated with a durable, patented nonstick surface.
 - You can call anyone and talk as long as you like on Saturdays and Sundays with this new wireless telephone service.
 - We need to raise \$25 to provide each needy child with a backpack filled with school supplies.
- 9.5 **Internet** Visit the Federal Trade Commission website and read the "Catch the Bandit in Your Mailbox" consumer warning at www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/marketing/bandit.htm. Select one or two sales or fundraising letters you've recently received and see whether they contain any of the suspicious content mentioned in the FTC warning. What does the FTC suggest you do with any materials that don't sound legitimate?

EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Exploring the Best of the Web:

Influence an Official and Promote Your Cause, p. 278

The strategies you use to lobby a government representative and to seal a business transaction are similar. Both tasks require the art of persuasion to convince someone

to take action on your behalf. Explore the sites at the Thomas site, and find an issue you can use to practice your skills at writing a persuasive message.

- What key ideas would you include in an e-mail message to persuade your congressional representative to support an issue important to you?
- In a letter to a senator or member of Congress, what information would you include to convince the reader to vote for an issue supporting small business?
- When sending a message to someone who daily receives hundreds of written appeals, what attention-getting techniques can you use? How can you get support for a cause that concerns you as a businessperson?

Exploring the Web on Your Own

Review these chapter-related websites on your own to learn more about writing persuasive messages.

- Visit the Federal Trade Commission website, www.ftc.gov/, to find out how consumers can cut down on the number of unsolicited mailings, calls, and emails they receive.
- Check out the how-to and reference articles at the Sales Marketing Network (SMN), www.info-now.com/SMN/home.asp, and learn what the FTC requirements are when using the word free in sales and marketing messages.
- Learn some aggressive sales strategies without going overboard from Guerrilla Marketing at www.guerrillamarketing.com.

LEARN INTERACTIVELY

Interactive Study Guide

Visit "My Companion Website" at www.prenhall.com/boeve. For Chapter 9, take advantage of the interactive "Study Guide" to test your chapter knowledge. Get instant feedback on whether you need additional studying. Read the "Current Events" articles to get the latest on chapter topics, and complete the exercises—as specified by your instructor.

This site offers a variety of additional resources: The "Research Area" helps you locate a wealth of information to use in course assignments. You can even send a message to online research experts, who will help you find exactly the information you need. The "Study Hall" helps you succeed in this course. "Talk in the Hall" lets you leave messages and meet new friends online. If you have a question, you can "Ask the Tutor." And to get a better grade in this course, you can find more help at "Writing Skills," "Study Skills," and "Study Tips."

Grammar Diagnostic Tests

Review and reinforce your grammar and language skills by taking one of the four online diagnostic tests offered at our companion website, www.prenhall/boeve.com. The four tests cover a variety of topics, including spelling, capitals, punctuation, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, sentence structure, sentence punctuation, clarity, word choice, style, organization skills, proofreading, and more. Submit your test and assess your competency. Then focus on improving areas where you are weak as you complete the exercises in this chapter.

APPLYING THE THREE-STEP WRITING PROCESS TO CASES

Apply each step to the following cases, as assigned by your instructor.

1 Planning Cases

Analyze

1. What's your general purpose?
2. What's your specific purpose?
3. What do you want readers to do?
4. Who are your readers? (Who is the primary audience? What do readers have in common? What is their general background? How will they react?)

Investigate

5. What information do readers need?
6. What facts must you gather?

Adapt

How will you establish credibility?

2 Writing Cases

Organize

1. What's your main idea?
2. Will you use the direct or indirect approach? Why?

Compose

3. Will your tone be informal or more formal?
4. Draft the message as discussed in the "Your task" section of the case.

3 Completing Cases

Review

Is the message organized? Is it clear? Is it appropriate? Is it effective?

What is the best way to send the message? By fax, live mail, e-mail, or envelope?

What is the best way to read your message? For errors in layout, spelling, and punctuation?

Proofread

Do you read your message for errors in layout, spelling, and punctuation?

PERSUASIVE REQUESTS FOR ACTION

1. Ouch, that hurts! Persuasive memo at Technology One requesting equipment retrofit Mike Andrews leaves your office, shutting the door behind him. The pain in his arm is reflected on his face. He's about to file a worker's compensation claim—your third this month. As human resources director for Technology One, a major software development firm, you're worried not only about costs but also about the well-being of your employees.

Mike's complaints are much the same as those already reported by two other computer technicians: sharp pains in the wrist, numbness, and decreased range of motion. You know that the average technician spends at least six hours a day working on the computer, yet you've never had this many complaints in a short time, and the severity of the symptoms seems to be increasing.

You decide to seek the advice of experts. A local sports and orthopedic medicine clinic gives you a detailed description of repetitive strain injuries, or RSIs. The symptoms they describe are virtually identical to those exhibited by your technicians. You're distressed to learn that, if the cause of these injuries is not found and corrected, your technicians could require surgery or could even become permanently disabled.

The physical therapist at the clinic believes that exercises and wrist splints may help relieve symptoms and could even prevent new injuries. However, she also recommends that you consult an ergonomic analyst who can evaluate the furniture and equipment your technicians are using.

On her advice, you bring in an analyst, who spends an entire day at your facility. After measuring desk and chair

height, watching technicians at work, and conducting a detailed analysis of all your equipment, he makes two recommendations: (1) Throw out all your computer keyboards and replace them with ergonomic keyboards, and (2) replace every mouse with a trackball. Suddenly you realize that the RSI complaints began shortly after your controller and purchasing manager bought a truckload of new computer equipment at a local merchant's going-out-of-business sale. You begin to wonder about the quality and design of that equipment, and you ask the analyst what benefits the changes will provide.

The ergonomic keyboard actually splits the traditional rows of keys in half and places the rows of keys at different angles, allowing the wrists to stay straight and relieving pressure on the forearm. The repetitive motions involved in using a mouse further aggravate the symptoms created by use of the traditional keyboard. Using a trackball does not require the repetitive clicking motion of the forefinger.

Your task: You know that replacing peripheral equipment on more than 50 computers will be costly, especially when the existing equipment is nearly new. However, increasing RSI and disability claims could be even more costly. Write a persuasive memo to Katherine Wilson, your controller, and convince her of the immediate need to retrofit the technicians' computer equipment.³⁴

2. Life's little hassles: Request for satisfaction It's hard to go through life without becoming annoyed at the way some things work. You have undoubtedly been dissatisfied with a product you've bought, a service you've received, or an action of some elected official or government agency.

Your task: Write a three- to five-paragraph persuasive e-mail request expressing your dissatisfaction in a particular case. Specify the action you want the reader to take.

3. Let's not swim with the sharks: Memo persuading MBC Mortgage Company to relocate its annual sales event Every year, MBC Mortgage Company runs an "incentive" contest among its salespeople from January through December, awarding the top seller in each of its 25 offices a "Weekend Adventure in Paradise." The trip includes all food, travel, and accommodations for your employee and a guest. They attend one sales meeting, but otherwise it's a well-earned vacation.

As director of meeting planning, you and your staff make the travel arrangements, but management chooses the incentive destination from your recommendations. Next year, winners are going to an exclusive resort in West Palm Beach, Florida. The posters featuring contest rules and picturing Florida palms and gleaming sand are ready to send to your branch offices in January. But it's September now, and last month's news from Florida has bothered you for two reasons: shark attacks and hurricanes.

First, a young boy lost an arm to a shark on Florida's west coast. Surgeons reattached the limb pulled from the eight-foot shark's jaws, but the boy's prognosis is uncertain. Then on Labor Day weekend, a 10-year-old Virginia boy died from massive blood loss after his father beat off a shark. The same weekend, a woman lost her foot and her companion died after sharks attacked them off North Carolina. Up and down Florida's east coast, bathers and surfers were bitten last month in shallow waters. Beaches closed, then reopened, then closed again. Swarms of sharks have been spotted swimming close to shore, in waters usually full of vacationers. Apparently, Florida leads the world in shark attacks (220 in the last decade). By comparison, California recorded only 33 attacks during the same period, according to the International Shark Attack Files, posted on the Internet by the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville, a website intended to be reassuring. It's not.

In addition to shark attacks, you're also worried about hurricanes. Although hurricanes are more common in late summer and early fall, in recent years, climate changes have made hurricanes less seasonal. High winds, heavy rains, and flooding have unpredictably devastated parts of Florida during unusual times of the year. You'd hate for your people to be caught in the wake of a hurricane.

What if employees arrive for their hard-earned weekend—and the beaches of "paradise" are closed? Or open and deadly dangerous? What if hurricanes force employees to evacuate their hotel rooms in the middle of the night? Wouldn't sunny, shark-free California be a better location?

You've heard about the classy Hotel del Coronado in Coronado, California. Located on an island in San Diego bay, the Hotel Del has hosted presidents, diplomats, movie stars, and other wealthy travelers. Those 26 acres of shark-scarce beaches, ocean-view pools, dining terraces, elegant spas, shops, and restaurants are beginning to look very enticing—and safe—as an alternate destination for your top employees.

Your task: Write a memo persuading MBC management to reprint the posters and relocate the incentive weekend to Coronado's Hotel Del. You could log on to the resort's website for juicy details to augment your argument, www.hoteldel.com, but remember that the shark attacks are your primary reason

for suggesting the change of venue. Use emotional and logical appeals. If you need them, current statistics are at www.flmnh.usf.edu/fish/Sharks/Statistics/statsus.htm.³⁵

4. I'll be cheaper: Persuasive letter to Miramax Films from a "downsized" publicist Working as a film publicist for Miramax Films was a dream come true—until you got laid off during a Hollywood slowdown. That was a week ago. Not one to let the grass grow, you've been reading business publications, looking for inspiration. You finally found it in the story of Harold Jackson and the Coca-Cola Company:

Like you, Jackson worked for Hill & Knowlton, one of the country's major PR firms, before he was hired as Coca-Cola's manager of media relations in Atlanta. Miramax hired you away from Hill & Knowlton two years ago to become a media relations representative.

Your special task was to cultivate relationships with the countless small and alternative print publications in the western United States. While they don't pull in as many readers as, say, *The Los Angeles Times*, collectively they command a large readership, and a blurb from a small paper's review is almost as effective in movie ads as one from a major critic. You discovered that, if handled politely and with some deference, the small-publication critics treated Miramax films more kindly.

In fact, you attribute the early word-of-mouth success of eventual Academy Award favorites such as *Shakespeare in Love* and *Chocolat* to your personal efforts to get these writers tickets to special previews, and press kits without delay. You returned their phone calls immediately, cultivated personal relationships, and now know them all on a first-name basis.

Back to Jackson's story: After helping Coke open The World of Coca-Cola entertainment center in Atlanta, Jackson launched his own company, JacksonHeath Public Relations International. His first client? His previous employer, Coca-Cola.

"Knowledge of Coke and how it functioned helped me do the job," he told an interviewer. But he also immediately hired employees so that he could spend his time cultivating new clients. "Business is built on relationships," he said, "and you have to take the relationship you have when you leave a company and run very fast."

In his first six months, Jackson's firm made \$100,000 nearly 100 percent of it from Coke. The company liked the professionalism of his business plan and the fact that he knew how Coke operated, and they knew his work. Also, he cost less to hire as a consultant than as an employee. Today, Coke accounts for only 7 percent of Jackson's business; his other clients have kept JacksonHeath profitable.

You know that Miramax shaved its promotional staff down to a few and there's no one left who'll be handling your form territory. That's a shame, because those small-publication reviews can do so much to promote a film's most vital asset: word of mouth among moviegoers.

Your task: Borrowing Jackson's ideas, write a letter persuading Miramax co-chairmen Harvey and Bob Weinstein to grant you a Hollywood-style meeting, in which you'll pitch your services as a consultant. Name your company, as Jack did, and build interest and desire to meet with you presenting your argument professionally. (At the meeting, you will elaborate on specific promotional ideas you have for the currently in production, since you know Miramax's business so well.)³⁶

5. No more driving: Persuasive memo about telecommuting to Bachman, Trinity, and Smith
Sitting in your Dallas office at the accounting firm of Bachman, Trinity and Smith, pouring over financial statements and clacking away on your calculator, it seems as though you could be doing this work from your home. After all, it's been two hours since lunch and you haven't spoken a word to anyone. Would they notice if you weren't here, as long as your work was completed on time? You've been an accountant here for five years; surely they can trust you by now.

During lunch breaks, you've been reading about telecommuting. With three kids at home and your commute time nearly an hour each way, the idea sounds incredibly appealing. Here are some notes you've made:

- Teleworking is environmentally friendly—reducing air pollution, for one thing.
- BellSouth has 1,200 telecommuters among 68,000 employees in a nine-state region.
- Texas Instruments paid a telecommuter for a second home phone line and gave her access to the company's intranet.
- International Telework Association and Council (ITAC), in Washington, D.C., says the number of teleworkers in the United States now tops 2.5 million and is rising.
- Employers save on overhead by eliminating office space, while employees are more relaxed and productive when commuting time becomes family time.
- Dallas commuters spend 46 hours a year stalled in traffic—fifth worst in the United States, according to a study by the Texas Transportation Institute.
- The same study says Dallas employers lost \$1.9 billion last year in fuel costs and lost productivity from those traffic delays.
- New technology—such as Internet accessibility, better laptops, handheld computers, web-enabled cellular phones, and so on—has improved worker mobility.
- Teleworker productivity is improved by as much as 22 percent, and employee turnover and operating costs are reduced, says ITAC.
- Employers who encourage teleworking have reduced absenteeism by 63 percent, saving an average of \$2,086 per worker per year, says Telework America, a Washington, D.C., research firm.

While experts debate the economic benefits of telecommuting, you've decided to propose the idea to your employer. You've read that other accounting firms in your area are experimenting with it. Maybe you could convince your boss, Marjorie Bachman, to let you work from home for a six-month trial.

There are good precedents. Some of the early and successful pioneers of teleworking are federal and state government agencies, and companies such as IBM, Cisco Systems, Symantec, AT&T, and American Express. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has nearly 14,000 employees; 7 percent of them are telecommuters. IBM has 60,000 telecommuters worldwide. About half of these organizations provide their employees with equipment and furnishings for home offices; you already have a home office with a PC and fax machine.

You'll have to overcome some drawbacks, including:

- Not being able to be "away" from work; hearing business and fax lines ringing after hours
- Losing the social benefits of interaction with co-workers

- Lacking visibility when it's time for promotions or new assignments
- Missing the opportunity to brainstorm with others (although you'll have e-mail and other tools for this)
- Feeling isolated
- Provoking anxiety in managers who can't handle supervising "invisible" employees

Your task: Using some of the foregoing facts to bolster your argument and counter objections, write a memo to senior partner Marjorie Bachman persuading her to give you a six-month trial as a telecommuter.³⁷

6. A laughing matter: Persuasive e-mail to Kinko's manager about making work more fun
Working at Kinko's has always been a little tense. After you'd been there awhile, you decided that it's the customers with urgent projects they are trying to finish who bring the stress in the door with them. By design, the round-the-clock copy and business service center attracts people under deadlines. But then employees pick up that tension, and by the end of the day, your shoulders are aching and your head hurts. Fun? Who has time? The people you see all day are in a hurry, hurry, hurry.

During a recent economic slowdown, things got worse. Customers started bringing in resumes for copying and renting time to surf the Internet for jobs. People got testy, customers and employees alike. Mistakes were made, co-workers called in sick whether they were or not, you ran out of pain relievers, your manager got frustrated, and morale sank. Work became a miserable experience.

But you have an idea: You read somewhere about people using laughter to relieve stress. One man watched comedies until his cancer went into remission. While you can't exactly roll out the VCR during working hours, you and your co-workers could bring more fun into the workplace. You've found impressive support for this idea.

"Laughter is a great way to release stress," says Dr. Tracy Gauder, a women's physician and consultant to the Oprah Winfrey show, website, and magazine. She says researchers have found that laughter helps the immune system. It lowers blood pressure, decreases heart strain, and lowers blood levels of the stress hormone cortisol. In one study, heart attack sufferers cut their risk of a second attack by 20 percent after watching 30 minutes of comedy videos per day. In fact, laughter therapy reduces average hospital stays by two days; it releases endorphins, which are the body's pain relievers. The very process of producing a belly laugh gives the lungs and heart an aerobic workout, and reduces stress by relaxing muscles.

Matt Weinstein owns a consulting company that helps corporations restructure their culture to "support laughter, play, and human values in the workplace—at the same time increasing productivity, teamwork, and physical well-being." At Charlton Memorial Hospital the staff let off steam by holding a contest to match pictures of pets with their employee owners. Sprint has sponsored "fun days," where employees wear clothes backwards, or go on photo safaris with disposable cameras, taking pictures of unsuspecting co-workers. Other companies have held costume parties, hung funny signs and posters, held messy-desk contests, hosted ice cream socials, and created weekend events to help employees relax and have fun.

Companies who've used these tactics say they release creativity, reduce absenteeism, and increase enthusiasm. Having fun

on the job doesn't mean workers are slacking off—it could mean they won't come down with a stress-related illness or injury. And think how much better customers are treated by employees who are enjoying their jobs!

Your task: On one of your breaks, send a persuasive e-mail to your manager, Brad Atlebury, convincing him to try some laugh therapy at Kinko's. Suggest the pet-matching contest, or any other tactic you think you can sell. Be sure to address the usual employer concern that employees having fun can't be working hard enough. Prove that Kinko's will benefit from having workers who enjoy coming to work.³⁸

7. Point, click, recruit: Persuasive memo about e-cruiting at Boulder Construction. More than 60 percent of computer-related companies are doing it, but only 2 percent of the companies in the building industry have tried it. You think Boulder Construction should join those state needing skilled workers, both in the field and behind the desk. As vice president, you're responsible for keeping costs down, and you're convinced that e-cruiting could save a bundle, while snatching talent out from under your competitors' noses.

Display ads in the Sunday newspapers have always been the standby for your human resources director, Sheila Young. They typically cost \$1,000 and up per job. On the other hand, major Internet career sites such as monster.com, hotjobs.com, or careermosaic.com may charge only \$100 to \$300 a month to list openings. And while the amount of information you can put in a newspaper ad is limited (since you pay by the word), online space is not. You can fully describe Boulder Construction's appeal to talented workers: its status as a major builder in the state of Colorado, its longevity, and its reputation for good benefits, safe working conditions, and upward mobility. *Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration News* says that in one survey, the average cost per hire via the web was \$183, compared to \$1,383 for traditional hiring.

Creating a website with a careers page is another good recruiting tactic; but you want to wait until you've tried the job boards. You've read that there are between 30,000 and 100,000 Internet sites devoted to recruiting, with 148.8 million Internet users in the United States. Last year, 74 percent of those over the age of 18 used the Internet to look for a job. That means your pool of potential candidates could be huge, certainly much larger than the local newspaper can attract. And there are no geographical limitations online. If they're willing to relocate, you might land good employees you'd never have met otherwise.

Some companies claim they've started receiving résumés within moments of posting an opening. Hiring decisions that once took six weeks are now being made within the hour, these companies report. No more waiting for snail mail. Using available software, you can search through online résumés using keywords to prescreen candidates for certain qualifications or experience.

Of course, you won't totally abandon traditional hiring. E-cruiting can't do everything. For instance, you won't see online applicants in person. Fulfilling diversity goals could be more difficult, which might lead to legal issues. And you could miss "passive" candidates, the type who are happily employed, highly qualified, and fought over by recruiters because they're often willing to take a good offer. But they rarely post résumés

online. On the other hand, passive candidates might respond to an online job posting.

Overall, you think e-cruiting offers advantages that will make the effort worthwhile. Bank of Montreal says it's saving more than \$1 million by e-cruiting this year; other large companies claim they've even hired executives using Internet tools.

Your task: Write a memo to Sheila Young persuading her to try e-cruiting for Boulder's next job openings. You don't want this to be an order, so use the AIDA plan to convince her that the advantages outweigh the drawbacks.³⁹

8. No choking matter: Persuasive letter from the Consumer Product Safety Commission about fast-food giveaways. When two babies died in 1999 after suffocating on plastic Pokemon balls their parents got from Burger King, the fast-food industry took notice. Some restaurants implemented safety tests on the billions of free toys being distributed with kids' meals. But Ann W. Brown, chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (and your boss), isn't convinced they're doing enough.

Brown wants better quality control over the giveaways, most of which are manufactured in China, at a cost of about 30 to 50 cents apiece. "Just because a toy is inexpensive and is given away doesn't mean it shouldn't be as safe as the safest toys," your boss believes. She's afraid toys designed for older children are being given to toddlers. Manufacturing defects are also a problem, and the only way to catch those is to test large numbers of toys as they come off the assembly line. She thinks restaurants should be responsible for such tests.

Fast-food giveaways are a major source of inexpensive playthings for young children, but they also benefit the donors. Kids often influence a family's dining decision—not for the food, but for the toys. A popular giveaway can increase a restaurant's sales by about 4 percent; a really big hit, by 15 percent.

As director of the safety commission's Office of Compliance, you applaud recent safety efforts by Burger King and McDonald's. Burger King has hired independent testers, strengthened safety standards, and conducted tests before, during, and after manufacturing. McDonald's also developed a testing doll, "McBaby," with artificial lungs to check suffocation risks. (They've loaned McBaby to your department so that other restaurants can copy the design.) Both companies recognize that it's to their advantage to protect child safety.

In addition to legal liabilities and damage to their reputations if children are injured or die from playing with toys they've given away, restaurants can lose millions in promotional dolls. A restaurant may spend as much as \$25 million advertising a doll with a popular film. They may also pay licensing fees: \$250,000 to \$1 million to movie studios for the right to produce a tie-in toy. Even when fees are reversed, and a manufacturer's entertainment company pays the restaurant to promote its products through a giveaway, the cost of injuries or fatalities if faulty toys could be staggering. And of course, no one wants children hurt.

The problem is growing. In one recent year, four fast-food companies voluntarily recalled five different toys. After receiving reports of "Hourglass Space Sprout" and "Look for Bumblebee" toys releasing small beads on which toddlers might choke, Burger King recalled 2.6 million toys, urging parents to bring them back for replacement toys. Prior to that, Burger King recalled 400,000 "Rattling Padding Riverboat" toys.

reports of metal pins coming loose from the paddle wheel. McDonald's recalled 234,000 "Scooter Bugs" after three children choked on the toys. Fortunately, none were seriously injured.

Burger King gives away nearly 100 million toys annually; McDonald's distributes 1.5 billion worldwide. They are the most vigilant members in a large industry, which accounts for one-third of all toys distributed in the United States. The potential for harm is huge.

Your task: Develop a letter to be sent to fast-food vendors in the United States, urging them to follow McDonald's and Burger King's lead in pretesting giveaway toys. Use facts, anecdotes, and benefits to bolster your position.⁴⁰

PERSUASIVE CLAIMS AND REQUESTS FOR ADJUSTMENTS

9. Too good to be true: E-mail to Page South requesting adjustment Page South offered its pager services for a mere \$5 a month. You purchased an inexpensive pager and signed a contract for two years. You thought your pager phone number was up and running for two weeks, but your co-workers and clients say they repeatedly get a busy signal when dialing your pager number. You call Page South and get the problem resolved, but this takes an additional week. You don't want to be charged for the time the pager wasn't in service. After discussing the situation with the local manager, she asks you to contact Judy Hinkley at the company's regional business office.

Your task: Send an e-mail message to Hinkley at Judy@pgsouth.com and request an adjustment to your account. Request credit or partial credit for one month of service. Remember to write a summary of events in chronological order, supplying exact dates for maximum effectiveness.

10. Endless trouble: Claim letter to Abe's Pool Installations As chief administrator, you worked hard to convince the board of directors of Westlake Therapy and Rehabilitation Center that a small, 8-by-15-foot Endless Pool would be a wonderful addition to the facility. Because the pool produces an adjustable current flow, a swimmer can swim "endlessly" against it, never reaching the pool's edge. With this new invention by a Philadelphia manufacturer, your patients could experience a complete range of water therapy in a year-round, indoor pool small enough to fit in a standard living room!

The board agreed, choosing the optional six-foot depth, which would allow for additional therapeutic uses but would require (1) a special platform and (2) installation in a room with a high ceiling. This old gymnasium would become your new Water Therapy Pavilion. Total cost with custom features: \$20,080, plus \$8,000 budgeted for installation.

According to the manufacturer, "The Endless Pool has been designed as a kit for bolt-together assembly. It can be assembled by two reasonably handy people with no prior installation experience following detailed procedural videos." You can do it yourself, they proclaim, or hire a local contractor.

You've hired Abe's Pool Installation, which will build the special access platform and install the pool. You passed along the instructional videos, along with the manufacturer's hotline numbers. They've offered a preinstallation engineering consultation for your customized pool, without additional charge, as you told Abe. They'll also be glad to help determine whether the planned site can handle the pool's 10-ton filled weight. Abe nodded and told you not to worry.

Finally, Abe's crew completed the platform and amid much excitement from your staff, assembled the galvanized steel pool. At a grand, ribbon-cutting dedication ceremony, you personally flipped the switch.

Immediately the hydraulic motor began moving 5,000 gallons of water a minute through a grill at the front, which smoothes and straightens the current. Everyone's excitement grew as the first wave of water washed down the center of the pool. But instead of entering the turning vane arrays (which were supposed to recirculate the water through hidden channels back to the front of the pool), the water kept going, splashing out the back of the pool and onto the platform and the gathered onlookers . . . at 5,000 gallons a minute. Panic and shouts erupted as you fumbled quickly to turn the thing off.

Final damage included a collapsed platform, a ruined floor, an incorrectly installed pool, and numerous dry-cleaning bills from onlookers. Fortunately, no one was hurt. Estimated cost with floor repair: \$10,000. Abe is not returning your phone calls. But local reporters are coming to film the damage tomorrow, and it's your job to conduct their tour.

Your task: Write a claim letter to Abe Hanson, Owner, Abe's Pool Installation, 2525 Rocket Lane, Manchester, MD 21088.⁴¹

11. Secondhand smoke: Letter requesting rent refund from Kuykendahl Joint, Inc. Last January in Harris County, Texas, your branch of Contract Management Services, Inc., (CMSI) signed a lease with Kuykendahl Joint, Inc., for new office space at 3638 University Boulevard, Suite 302, Houston, TX 77005-3396. No one anticipated the nightmare that would follow. You have been assistant manager since before the move. But after relocating, you've threatened to quit many times—and so has your manager, Kathleen Thomas.

The problem is secondhand smoke invading your offices from other tenants. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calls this ETS (environmental tobacco smoke) and classifies it as a Group A (known human) carcinogen. There is no safe level of exposure to Group A toxins: The Surgeon General says the 4,600 chemicals in ETS (including cyanide, arsenic, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, and ammonia) are "a cause of disease, including lung cancer, in healthy nonsmokers."

The smoke wafts in the front door of your office and seeps through openings in hollow walls shared with tenants on either side of CMSI. You and others have suffered bronchitis, migraines, and respiratory infections since the move. One of your most valuable employees, a star performer responsible for landing many new contracts, quit last week. "I can't risk this," she said. "I've had asthma since I was little, and it's getting worse."

Another employee is worried about his heart; he's in the high-risk category and there's evidence ETS can trigger heart attacks. Pneumonia, allergies, ear infections, other forms of cancer (including breast, cervical, endocrine, etc.)—all are "causally associated" with ETS, according to the EPA. In fact, secondhand smoke is more dangerous than what smokers inhale. That's because the heat of the draw burns off some of the toxins, which are also filtered by the cigarette or cigar.

Last month CMSI spent \$3,000 hiring contractors to weather-strip around vents, electrical outlets, and other built-in fixtures—even to spray polyurethane foam around the pipes that are under sinks and behind toilets. But you're still choking and gagging on smelly carcinogens. By the end of the day, you've got

reports of metal pins coming loose from the paddle wheel. McDonald's recalled 234,000 "Scooter Bugs" after three children choked on the toys. Fortunately, none were seriously injured.

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Your task: Send an e-mail message to Hinkley at Judy@pgsouth.com and request an adjustment to your account. Request credit or partial credit for one month of service. Remember to write a summary of events in chronological order, supplying exact dates for maximum effectiveness.

10. Endless trouble: Claim letter to Abe's Pool Installations. As chief administrator, you worked hard to convince the board of directors of Westlake Therapy and Rehabilitation Center that a small, 8-by-15-foot Endless Pool would be a wonderful addition to the facility. Because the pool produces an adjustable current flow, a swimmer can swim "endlessly" against it, never reaching the pool's edge. With this new invention by a Philadelphia manufacturer, your patients could experience a complete range of water therapy in a year-round, indoor pool small enough to fit in a standard living room!

The board agreed, choosing the optional six-foot depth, which would allow for additional therapeutic uses but would require (1) a special platform and (2) installation in a room with a high ceiling. The old gymnasium would become your new Water Therapy Pavilion. Total cost with custom features: \$20,080, plus \$8,000 budgeted for installation.

According to the manufacturer, "The Endless Pool has been designed as a kit for bolt-together assembly. It can be assembled by two reasonably handy people with no prior installation experience following detailed procedural videos." You can do it yourself, they proclaim, or hire a local contractor.

You've hired Abe's Pool Installation, which will build the special access platform and install the pool. You passed along the instructional videos, along with the manufacturer's hotline numbers. They've offered a preinstallation engineering consultation for your customized pool, without additional charge, as you told Abe. They'll also be glad to help determine whether the planned site can handle the pool's 10-ton filled weight. Abe nodded and told you not to worry.

Finally, Abe's crew completed the platform and amid much excitement from your staff, assembled the galvanized steel pool. At a grand, ribbon-cutting dedication ceremony, you personally flipped the switch.

Immediately the hydraulic motor began moving 5,000 gallons of water a minute through a grill at the front, which smoothes and straightens the current. Everyone's excitement grew as the first wave of water washed down the center of the pool. But instead of entering the turning vane arrays (which were supposed to recirculate the water through hidden channels back to the front of the pool), the water kept going, splashing out the back of the pool and onto the platform and the gathered onlookers . . . at 5,000 gallons a minute. Panic and shouts erupted as you fumbled quickly to turn the thing off.

Final damage included a collapsed platform, a ruined floor, an incorrectly installed pool, and numerous dry-cleaning bills from onlookers. Fortunately, no one was hurt. Estimated cost with floor repair: \$10,000. Abe is not returning your phone calls. But local reporters are coming to film the damage tomorrow, and it's your job to conduct their tour.

Your task: Write a claim letter to Abe Hanson, Owner, Abe's Pool Installation, 2525 Rocket Lane, Manchester, MD 21088.⁴¹

11. Secondhand smoke: Letter-requesting rent refund from Kuykendahl Joint, Inc. Last January in Harris County, Texas, your branch of Contract Management Services, Inc. (CMSI) signed a lease with Kuykendahl Joint, Inc., for new office space at 3638 University Boulevard, Suite 302, Houston, TX 77005-3396. No one anticipated the nightmare that would follow. You have been assistant manager since before the move. But after relocating, you've threatened to quit many times—and so has your manager, Kathleen Thomas.

The problem is secondhand smoke invading your offices from other tenants. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calls this ETS (environmental tobacco smoke) and classifies it as a Group A (known human) carcinogen. There is no safe level of exposure to Group A toxins. The Surgeon General says the 4,600 chemicals in ETS (including cyanide, arsenic, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, and ammonia) are "a cause of disease, including lung cancer, in healthy nonsmokers."

The smoke wafts in the front door of your office and seeps through openings in hollow walls shared with tenants on either side of CMSI. You and others have suffered bronchitis, migraines, and respiratory infections since the move. One of your most valuable employees, a star performer responsible for landing many new contracts, quit last week. "I can't risk this," she said. "I've had asthma since I was little, and it's getting worse."

Another employee is worried about his heart; he's in the high-risk category and there's evidence, ETS can trigger heart attacks. Pneumonia, allergies, ear infections, other forms of cancer (including breast, cervical, endocrine, etc.)—all are "causally associated" with ETS, according to the EPA. In fact, secondhand smoke is more dangerous than what smokers inhale. That's because the heat of the draw burns off some of the toxins, which are also filtered by the cigarette or cigar.

Last month CMSI spent \$3,000 hiring contractors to weather-strip around vents, electrical outlets, and other built-in fixtures—even to spray polyurethane foam around the pipes that are under sinks and behind toilets. But you're still choking and gagging on smelly carcinogens. By the end of the day, you've got

red eyes, a runny nose, often a headache—and you smell like a poker game.

Thomas says it's no use talking to the offending smokers. She's collected a list (from Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights) that cites legal precedents around the country, in which courts have held landlords responsible both for eliminating ETS and for compensating tenants.

Your task: Thomas has asked you to write a persuasive letter for her signature to Robert Bechtold, Manager, Kuykendahl Joint, Inc. (88 North Park Road, Houston, TX 77005). Insist that the landlord (1) improve the air quality immediately, (2) refund lease payments totaling \$9,000 from January 1, and (3) reimburse CMSI for the improvements made in an attempt to solve the problem. "If this doesn't work, we're moving," she says grimly. "And then we'll sue."⁴²

12. Broadband blues: Persuasive claim letter to ZippieNet about cable modem failures When your Internet access—you signed up right away. You figured \$49.95 a month wasn't too much to pay for speed online when your business as a freelance journalist depends on getting access to information as soon as it's available.

Sometimes you have to wade through a dozen websites just to find one vital piece of information, whether a statistic or a quote or a historical fact to support a story you're working on. If you're going to compete with staff writers at the various publications that buy your work as an independent contractor, you need to deliver stories as fast as anyone to meet short deadlines. So having a "broadband" Internet connection that's "always on" and "five times faster" than a dial-up line could be a life-saver. Imagine—no more busy signals!

At first you were very pleased. When the system worked, it worked beautifully. You were dazzled by the speed, and happy about not having to dial up to check your e-mail. With the always-on connection, your software alerted you as soon as mail arrived. Yes, that first day was quite wonderful.

Then the problems began. Three days a week for four weeks, the system failed and you were stuck offline. When you called ZippieNet's support lines, you were put on hold for 30 minutes, and when someone finally answered, they seemed ill trained and overworked. Finally, a ZippieNet repairman came to check your cable modem. He said he hadn't seen that model in years; the installation subcontractors had apparently supplied ancient equipment. When he installed a newer-model replacement, the service seemed at first to improve.

That was three months ago. Since then, you've experienced total shutdowns at least twice a month. During periods of high usage, the zippy speeds ZippieNet promised you slow down considerably—to levels not much better than your old dial-up connection. At \$49.95 per month, that's unacceptable. You've heard about this problem with other providers, where they've oversold their capacity and too many users are trying to access the same network at the same time. So far your latest complaints to ZippieNet via phone have brought no solution or helpful response. Only vague promises that the service will be better soon and urgings to be patient.

And now the unthinkable has happened. Twice last week the system went down for more than 24 hours. Fate being unkind, those 48 hours were smack in the middle of your work on an article that you had contracted to sell for \$1,000—except that you were unable to access critical information, unable to

deliver the story on time, and not only lost the sale, but your editor who had been counting on it to fill a space was so angry he vowed never to work with you again.

Your task: Write a letter to ZippieNet, 1203 West Barber Avenue, Nashville, TN 37214, demanding a refund for your four months of service, plus \$1,000 for lost income on the foiled article sale to *Arete Magazine* (include a copy of your article contract), and \$3,000 toward the loss of future sales to the same publication. (If they pay the \$1,000, you'll be content, but don't tell them that.) Do suggest that you will remain a customer if they can deliver improved service within three weeks. When it works, you love broadband.⁴³

13. Not too late for others: Letter to the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service requesting recall of Hillshire Farm meat products All you wanted was to make a big impression on managers at TriTech, Inc., coming to your area for a team meeting on productivity issues yesterday, January 23. The meeting included two managers each from four departments: marketing, administration, manufacturing, and purchasing. The full Productivity Team includes seven departments, but it was decided that smaller group meetings would be a good way to get the ball rolling. Thank goodness.

As marketing manager, you dipped into the departmental budget to finance a buffet lunch for participants. You decided you could do better than a caterer by buying the food yourself the night before from Bob and Jill's Gourmet Market in Baltimore. As the meeting wound down, members of your staff laid out an attractive array of breads, cheeses, sandwich meats, vegetables, condiments, salads, and desserts pulled from the department's refrigerator.

"Brilliant idea," said a colleague from manufacturing as he dove in hungrily.

"It not only looks great, but you've saved money by doing it yourself. Why don't you come to work in our department?" said the purchasing manager between bites.

Now the only thing you're grateful for is the fact that the entire team wasn't present. This way, TriTech only lost the services of 8 managers at once, not 14. So much for productivity! By 8 P.M., six of you were in the emergency room, lunch coming out, intravenous fluids going in. The other two toughed it out at home, but swore they'd never eat at another company buffet. None of you are at work today.

According to the Baltimore City Hospital emergency room staff, the timing of your reactions and your collective symptoms—nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, intense abdominal cramps, high fever, and screaming headaches—are consistent with salmonellosis, a fairly common form of food poisoning from the *salmonella* bacteria, or it might have been staphylococcal food poisoning. Although you're all home now, feeling miserable, you were lucky. People sometimes die from these forms of poisoning, nurses told you.

After talking with hospital staff, you've decided the culprit was the Hillshire Farms cooked, sliced beef and ham. You kept everything strictly cold until the last minute, and you remembered checking the freshness date, which said "Sell Before February 1." It must have been contaminated at the plant. The hospital suggested that you alert the store where you bought the meat. Then, if you wished, you could contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

"They're the ones who issue recalls of tainted meat and other foods," Dr. Samuel Hill told you. "If consumers complain, the

do laboratory tests if they can find the products. You might save someone from what you've been through or worse, if you hurry."

You decide it's the only humanitarian thing to do. Normally, for a faulty product, you'd demand a refund, but \$20 from Hillshire Farms won't make up for the horrors of last night. Using your persuasive talents to have this dangerous product recalled is the best compensation you can think of.

Your task: Your complaint should be addressed to Elijah Walker, associate deputy administrator for the Office of Public Health and Science, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-3700. Persuade him that the meat you bought should be tested for a possible recall. Sending a copy of this letter to Hillshire Farms will constitute your claim to them, so make it thorough.⁴⁴

14. Tangled Web: Persuasive e-mail to PurelySoftware regarding an online order duplication

What a mess. As if running a small business didn't have enough challenges, now your cost-saving tactic is costing you more in lost time than you saved by trying to order products through an online vendor.

Your art consulting business, ArtAlive, has been doing so well you hired a new employee. Your company finds, installs, and often commissions art, sculpture, and signage for corporations, hospitals, universities, and foundations. It's an odd niche, but one you've worked hard to develop. Your new graphic designer, Monica Soderburgh, will be a tremendous help as she produces presentation materials to promote your services.

In hindsight, it would have been easier to send your assistant out to buy Adobe InDesign, Version 1.5, and Adobe Photoshop, Version 6.0, from a brick-and-mortar store. But to save money, you decided to shop on CNET.com, which lists and rates vendors and will send price-drop alerts via e-mail. You chose online vendor PurelySoftware because their price was low and they were offering a "free shipping weekend."

You clicked through to purelysoftware.com, found the products, numbered PN#27510216 and PN#32101335 respectively, hit the "buy" buttons for both, filled out the order forms, including your credit card number and expiration date, and clicked "submit." Nothing happened. Usually after submitting an online order, a "thank you" screen appears, and most vendors send a confirmation e-mail message. You received nothing.

Worried, you called the customer service number (1-888-555-4250). You explained what happened to an operator named Sylvia. "Just a moment," she said and put you on hold. She came back in a moment and said that your order came through, but all it showed was your name, company, and credit card information, with no products listed.

"With the free shipping weekend, it's been very busy and we've been having a little trouble with the website," Sylvia admitted. "You're not the first to call." She said she'd cancel that order and submit a new one, taken from you over the phone. While you were at it, you decided to order the latest version of Norton Antivirus for an additional \$20, since shipping was free for the next two days. That was on May 3.

On May 6, you received the products you ordered on the phone. You filed the shipping invoice and credit card receipt (\$649 for Adobe InDesign, \$564 for Adobe Photoshop, \$20 for Norton Antivirus, totaling \$1,233) and gave the software to Monica.

Three weeks have passed and today (May 24) you received

order date and inside was exactly what you'd ordered online, two software programs only, with a receipt saying your credit card was charged \$1,213.00. Coming so much later, you wonder if some technician "unclogged" the website, causing the missing orders to surface. Yours must have been shipped automatically with the rest.

Your task: Technically, you did place the first order. But you also called and canceled, although you have no written proof. Send an e-mail message to customerservice@purelysoftware.com, using persuasive tactics to convince them that the error was theirs, not yours. You want an immediate credit to your Visa account and a postage-paid shipping label to return the products. For security, don't include your credit card number in this first message, but provide your telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address, shipping address, and order number from the latest shipping invoice: AARGS 2287 89.1. (The phone order was AARGT 3928 88 3.)⁴⁵

15. Cow-spotty text: E-mail to Gateway from Words Unlimited requesting warranty extension

Every Gateway computer sold provides a 30-day period during which you can upgrade, downgrade, make exchanges, and change your mind without paying full, stand-alone price for components you wish to add. That's good, because the first thing you discovered when you opened the cow-spotted boxes a week after they were delivered to your offices via UPS was that the salesman who sold you this small-business "Professional S1300" system (Chris Swanson) apparently thought you didn't need Internet access.

You thought every computer in the world came with a built-in modem. Since it wasn't specified, you didn't get it. You made this embarrassing discovery after you tried for half an hour to insert a phone line into the network receptacle. The plug went in fine but you kept getting error messages saying there was no modem. You finally agreed.

All Gateways are shipped direct from the factory, whether ordered online or at a store. You'd ordered yours at the Lincoln, Nebraska, store. You called and Swanson apologized profusely for the mix-up. He ordered a modem for you, charging your credit card the low, add-on price because you were still within the 30-day grace period.

Ten days later, the package arrived. (Modems had been temporarily out of stock.) You were busy with work (still being conducted on your five-year-old Pentium), but when you could get away, you dismantled the unused computer and lugged it to the store, where the modem was installed for free. You had to wait two days because the technician was out sick. It took another day before you could pick it up and, after the weekend, you started connecting the new system again. That took two days because of work interruptions again. Finally, a month after you received it, the new system is assembled.

Your company, Words Unlimited, provides editing and typesetting services to small publishers. You and your partner keep two computers humming all day while you work with text on-screen. You explained this to Swanson and he suggested a Mitsubishi "flat-screen" monitor using "Diamondtron technology" for outstanding imagery. You paid an extra \$70 for the upgraded, 17-inch monitor.

Now you can't believe your eyes. Thinking back, you realize that the showroom demos that looked so good involved mostly graphics. You never tested a page of text, much to your dismay. You're staring at broken letters—collections of discon-

nected dots. "It's barely readable!" you exclaim. Your partner agrees, "Our old CRT looks so much better." After a day of eyestrain and a terrible headache, you realize this will never do.

Back at the Gateway store, you discover: (1) No matter what brand, "flat-screen" means liquid crystal display (LCD)—bad for text, although no one here will admit it; and (2) your grace period ended yesterday.

You also find an impressive, 19-inch, CRT monitor with a fast refresh-rate that no one showed you the first time. Text looks great on it! It costs \$20 more than the Mitsubishi as an exchange, but if you don't get your warranty extended, it's going to cost a lot more. You'll have to pay the stand-alone price, and you'll have to sell or discard the Mitsubishi monitor because Gateway won't take it as a return.

Your task: Write a persuasive letter to store manager Ann Cameron, Gateway Country Store, 2900 Pine Lake Road, Lincoln, NE 68516, who Swanson says has leeway to extend your 30-day grace period. Use semantics, facts, anecdotes, emotions, and logic to support your argument. So far every Gateway employee has been courteous, quick, and eager to help, despite the mix-ups. You have high hopes.⁴⁶

SALES AND FUNDRAISING MESSAGES

16. Quotesmith.com: E-mail extolling a better way to buy insurance The great thing about Quotesmith.com is that no one is obligated to buy a thing. Consumers can log on to your website, ask for dozens of free insurance quotes, and then go off and buy elsewhere. They can look at instant price-comparison quotes (from more than 300 insurers) for term life, dental, individual and family medical insurance, small group medical insurance, workers' compensation, short-term medical insurance, Medicare supplement insurance, "no-exam" whole life insurance, fixed-annuity insurance, and (in a click-through arrangement with Progressive) private passenger automobile insurance. All rates are up-to-the-day accurate, and Quotesmith is the largest single source for comprehensive insurance price comparisons in the United States.

Once consumers see your price-comparison charts, many choose to fill out an easy insurance application request right on your site. Why deal with an insurance salesperson when you can see the price differences for yourself—especially over such a broad range of companies? Quotesmith backs up this application with toll-free customer-service lines operated by salaried representatives. They're not working on commission, but they know about insurance. And Quotesmith has based its new online service on a long history of serving the insurance industry.

The product pretty much sells itself, and that's what you love about your marketing job with Quotesmith. Consumers and computers do most of the work—and the results are at lightning speed, especially compared with what the insurance business was like just a few years ago. During peak periods, the site has been processing one quote request every four seconds, which leads, ultimately, to increased policy sales without an agent or intermediary.

Quotesmith advertises both in print and on TV, saying that it provides "the lowest term life rates in America or we'll overnight you \$500." Your company also guarantees the accuracy of quotes against a \$500 reward. Final rates depend on variables such as age, sex, state availability, hazardous activities, personal and family health history, driving records, and so on.

You're proud of the fact that Quotesmith has received positive press from *Nation's Business*, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Money*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Forbes* ("Quotesmith.com provides rock-bottom quotes")—your favorite. For every term-life quote, you even provide consumers with a look at how each insurer's ability to pay claims is rated by A.M. Best, Duff & Phelps, Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Weiss Ratings, Inc.

And all of this is free. Too bad more people don't know about your services.

Your task: It's your job to lure more insurance customers to Quotesmith. You've decided to use direct e-mail marketing (like cold-calling without the telephone). Write a pitch extolling the benefits of Quotesmith's services, and focus on consumers who are unfamiliar with the site. Be sure your message is suited to an e-mail format, with an appropriate subject heading.⁴⁷

17. Buses for seniors: Fundraising letter from Morris County Senior Center The Morris County Senior Center is one of New Jersey's oldest nonprofit institutions for the elderly. Over the past 50 years, it has relied on financial support from government, businesses, and individuals.

Unfortunately, recent state and federal cutbacks have dug into the organization's budget. In addition, in the last five years two of the county's largest companies, Hardwick Industries and McCarthy Electrical Motors, have moved offshore and shut down local operations. Both businesses were supporters of the center, as were many of the workers who lost jobs.

However, the needs of the center keep growing. For many of the county's roughly 1,000 seniors who live alone, it's the only place where they can meet their peers, use a special library, avoid extreme weather, or get a well-balanced meal. The center is not a nursing home and has no overnight facilities. Most individuals get to the facility on one of the three shuttle-type buses belonging to the center. The buses are also used for various day trips to museums, plays, and similar functions. Occasionally, they are used to help the temporarily disabled get to doctors' offices or pharmacists.

Each bus is more than eight years old. Although not quite unsafe, the buses are showing their age. The constant repairs are stopgap measures at best, and most weeks at least one of the vehicles is inoperable. Monthly repairs are averaging a total of \$300 for the three vehicles. In addition, when the vans aren't working, the clients, staff, and budget all suffer. Seniors can't get to the center, trips are canceled, and drivers are sometimes paid for coming to work even though they aren't able to drive.

Conservatively, it would cost about \$23,000 to replace each van with a new one: \$84,000 total. This includes estimates on how much the center could gain from selling the old vans. It's a fair amount of money, but in the opinion of your board of directors, buying new vans would be better than continuously repairing the old ones or risking the purchase of used ones.

Your task: As director of the center, draft a fundraising letter to send to all of the businesses in the county. Stress the good work the center does and the fact that this is a special fundraising effort. Mention that all the money collected will go directly toward the purchase of the vans.

18. A clean deal: Sales letter from ScrubaDub about its Car Care Club When Bob and Dan Paisner opened 11 ScrubaDub car washes in Massachusetts and Rhode

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Island, they applied high-tech solutions to the traditional business, and ScrubADub emerged as the most innovative car wash in the industry. At ScrubADub, computers track everything from a customer's name to the date and type of their last wash. They even "sense" what kind of wheels a car has. These are just a few of the reasons your job in ScrubADub's marketing department is so easy.

When customers arrive, a "touchless system" sizes up their cars—literally—and prescribes exactly how much of the chain's secret-formula "Superglo" detergent to dispense and how much water pressure to use. This process eliminates dull soap residues and handling marks or nicks from abrasive equipment. Special sensors automatically prescribe scrubbing for white walls, pressure spray for wire wheels, or buffing for chrome. Using softened, heated well water eliminates spots, and recycling that water for scrubbing wheels and undercarriages helps the environment. A soft cloth adds a final gloss.

A human "Satisfaction Supervisor" is present to handle special requests, such as towel drying or gas stain removal. Your Bumper to Bumper Guarantee lets dissatisfied customers go through the wash until they're happy, or they get a refund. With a driver's license for proof, people get a free wash on their birthdays.

You're like thousands of others who haven't found a more "personalized" automated car wash. That may sound like an oxymoron, but the Palsons make sure it's not. They say they're New England drivers' "best defense against a dirty world," offering relief from salt, snow, rain, mud, sleet, dust, and pigeons, since clean cars last longer and look newer. And now they have a new brainstorm for you to promote: the ScrubADub Car Care Club.

By signing up for a \$5.95 "Lifetime membership" (good for as long as you own the car), drivers can combat whatever Mother Nature or a nearby construction site dishes out. Whether they join at your locations or online at www.scrubadub.com/club.htm, members receive by mail a bar-coded sticker to place in the driver's-side window. When they drive in for a wash, the bar code is scanned and linked to a central database via the Internet. Customer information flashes on a screen, so a well-trained attendant can greet them by name and glance over their washing history, perhaps suggesting it's time for a wax.

This system not only improves customer relations while increasing sales, but club members get exclusive deals designed for Northeastern drivers. The 48-Hour Express Guarantee allows the same exterior wash for free within 48 hours if their car gets dirty—great for inclement weather. The 4-Day Clean Car Guarantee extends that to four days for purchasers of the premium Super Wash, Luxury Wash, Special Wash, or Works Wash. The Frequent Wash Bonus Program awards one free exterior Works Wash ("our best wash for our best customers") after every 10 washes purchased. Members don't have to collect stickers or hole punches—the computer tracks it. They also get an instant \$5 rebate on any foam car wax. ScrubADub offers three types: Turtle Wax (lasts 10 days), Simonize (20 days), or Blue Coral (30 days). And there'll be additional members-only specials from time to time.

Your task: Write a sales letter promoting the Car Care Club. Since most customers are busy people, use techniques for quick-scan communications while following the AIDA plan.⁴⁸

19. Always urgent! Memo pleading case for hosting a Red Cross blood drive Not many people realize that donated blood lasts for only 72 hours. Some components are processed to last longer, but the mainstay of emergency blood supplies must be replenished in an ongoing effort. No one is more skilled, dedicated, or efficient about handling blood than the American Red Cross, which is responsible for half the nation's supply of blood and blood products. Its Jerome H. Holland Laboratory has helped pioneer the blood-collecting and blood-processing methods that make blood banks possible.

This morning before heading off to your job as food service manager at the Pechanga Casino Entertainment Center in Temecula, California, you were concerned to see on TV news that the Red Cross had put out a call for blood—national supplies have fallen dangerously low. When people are moved by a highly publicized disaster, they're emotionally eager to help out by donating blood. But in calm times, only 5 percent of eligible donors think of giving blood. You're one of those few. And today, you're going to do more than just roll up your own sleeve.

Donated blood helps victims of accidents and diseases such as cancer or heart disease, as well as surgery patients. You remember reading about Melissa, who was diagnosed with multiple congenital heart defects and underwent her first open-heart surgery at one week old. She's five now and has used well over 50 units of donated blood, and she wouldn't be alive without them. In a thank-you letter, her mother lauded the many, total strangers who had "given a piece of themselves" to save her precious daughter—and countless others. A donor's pint of blood benefits up to four people.

You know the local Red Cross chapter takes its Blood Mobile to corporations, restaurants—even beauty salons—willing to host public blood drives. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the board of directors agreed to support a blood drive at the casino? The slot machines and gaming tables are usually full, hundreds of employees are on hand, and people who've never visited might come down to donate blood. The positive publicity certainly couldn't hurt Pechanga's community image. With materials from the Red Cross, you're confident you can organize Pechanga's hosting effort and handle the promotion. (Last year you headed the casino's successful Toys for Tots drive.)

To give blood, one must be healthy, be at least 17 years old (with no upper age limit), and weigh at least 110 pounds. Donors can give every 56 days. You'll be urging Pechanga donors to eat well, drink water, and be rested before the Blood Mobile arrives.

You like the local chapter's mission statement. It says in part, the Red Cross is "a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement" which will "prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found." All assistance is given free of charge, made possible by "contributions of people's time, money, and skills."

And in the case of you and your co-workers, a piece of yourselves.

Your task: Write a memorandum persuading the Pechanga board of directors to host a public Red Cross blood drive. Ask the board to donate bottled water, orange juice, and snacks for donors. (You'll organize food service workers to handle the distribution.) To support your request, use a variety of appeals, mentioning both tangible and intangible benefits. To donate blood, call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.⁴⁹