

PART VIII

## CHAPTER 8: PRESENTATIONS TO PERSUADE



# 51. Introduction

## Chapter 8 Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and demonstrate how to use six principles of persuasion.
2. Describe similarities and differences between persuasion and motivation.
3. Identify and demonstrate the effective use of five functions of speaking to persuade.
4. Label and discuss three components of an argument.
5. Identify and provide examples of emotional appeals.
6. Demonstrate the importance of ethics as part of the persuasion process.



Dhavit is passionate about personal health and wellness and is planning on using his knowledge to develop a speech to help persuade some fellow colleagues to stop smoking cigarettes. As you read through this chapter, consider how Dhavit might adapt his planning and delivery to help persuade some of his colleagues to stop smoking.



No doubt there has been a time when you wanted to achieve a goal or convince your manager about a work need and you thought about how you were going to present your request. Consider how often people—including people you have never met and never will meet—want something from you? When you watch television, advertisements reach out for your attention, whether you watch them or not. When you use the internet, pop-up advertisements often appear. Most people are surrounded, even inundated by persuasive messages. Mass and social media in the 21st century have had a significant effect on persuasive communication that you will certainly recognize. This chapter is about how to communicate with persuasion and how to convince others to consider your point of view.

## Chapter Preview

- What is Persuasion?
- Principles of Persuasion
- Persuasive Presentations
- Making an Argument
- Speaking Ethically and Avoiding Fallacies
- Conclusion



## 52. Principles of Persuasion

Persuasion is an act or process of presenting arguments to move, motivate, or change your audience. Persuasion can be implicit or explicit and can have both positive and negative effects. In this chapter the importance of ethics will continued to be reviewed, especially related to presenting motivational arguments to your audience so that they will consider your points, adopt your view, or change their behavior.

Motivation is different from persuasion in that it involves the force, stimulus, or influence to bring about change. Persuasion is the process, and motivation is the compelling stimulus that encourages your audience to change their beliefs or behaviour, to adopt your position, or to consider your arguments.



### Principles of Persuasion

What is the best way to succeed in persuading your listeners? There is no one “correct” answer, but many experts have studied persuasion and observed what works and what doesn’t. Social psychologist Robert Cialdini (2006) offers us six principles of persuasion that are powerful and effective:

1. Reciprocity
2. Scarcity
3. Authority

4. Commitment and consistency

5. Consensus

6. Liking

## Reciprocity



Reciprocity is the mutual expectation for exchange of value or service. In all cultures, when one person gives something, the receiver is expected to reciprocate. If you are in customer service and go out of your way to meet the customer's need, you are appealing to the principle of reciprocity with the knowledge that all humans perceive the need to reciprocate—in this case, by increasing the likelihood of making a purchase from you because you were especially helpful. Reciprocity builds trust and the relationship develops, reinforcing everything from personal to brand loyalty. By taking the lead and giving, you build in a moment where people will feel compelled from social norms and customs to give back.



## Scarcity

You want what you can't have, and it's universal. People are naturally attracted to the exclusive, the rare, the unusual, and the unique. If they are convinced that they need to act now or it will disappear, they are motivated to action. Scarcity is the perception of inadequate supply or a limited resource. For a sales representative, scarcity may be a key selling

point—the particular car, or theater tickets, or pair of shoes you are considering may be sold to someone else if you delay making a decision. By reminding customers not only of what they stand to gain but also of what they stand to lose, the representative increases the chances that the customer will make the shift from contemplation to action and decide to close the sale.



## Authority

Trust is central to the purchase decision. Whom does a customer turn to? A salesperson may be part of the process, but an endorsement by an authority holds credibility that no one with a vested interest can ever attain. Knowledge of a product, field, trends in the field, and even research can make a salesperson more effective by the appeal to the

principle of authority. It may seem like extra work to educate your customers, but you need to reveal

your expertise to gain credibility. Reading the manual of a product is not sufficient to gain expertise—you have to do extra homework. The principle of authority involves referencing experts and expertise.

## Commitment and Consistency



People like to have consistency in what is said to them or in writing. Therefore, it is important that all commitments made are honored at all times.

## Consensus



Testimonials, or first person reports on experience with a product or service, can be highly persuasive. People often look to each other when making a purchase decision, and the herd mentality is a powerful force across humanity. Leverage testimonials from clients to attract more clients by making them part of your team. The principle of consensus involves the tendency of the individual to follow the lead of the group or peers.

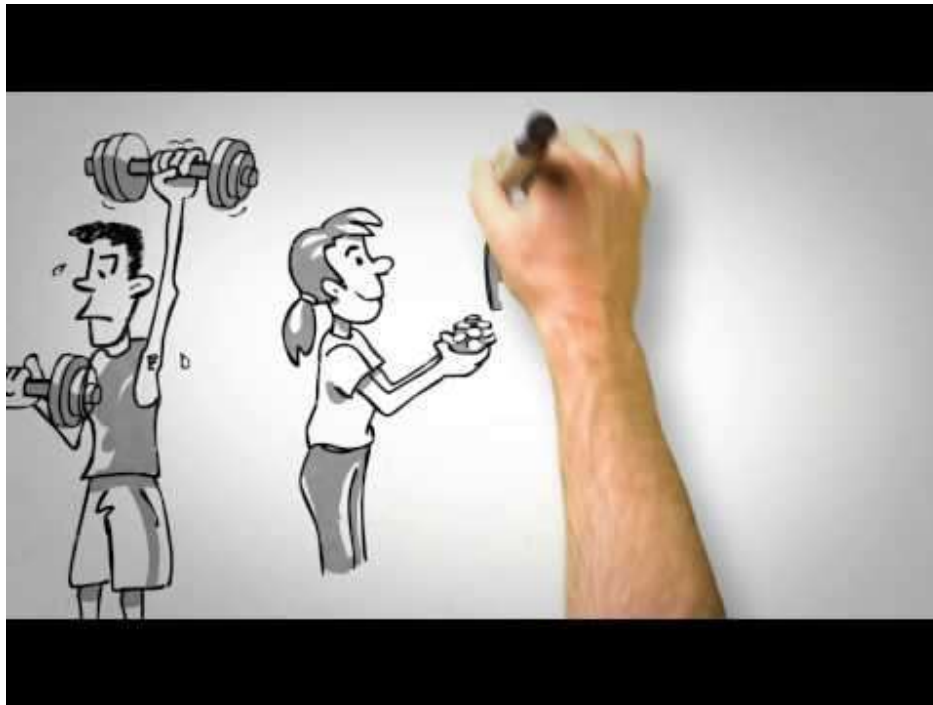
## Liking



We tend to be attracted to people who communicate to us that they like us, and who make us feel good about ourselves. Given a choice, these are the people with whom we are likely to associate. The principle of liking involves the perception of safety and belonging in communication.

To summarize, a persuasive message can succeed through the principles of reciprocity, scarcity, authority, commitment and consistency, consensus, and liking.

**Watch the following 12 minute RSA animated video; *The Science of Persuasion***



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/commbusprofcdn/?p=544>

## 53. Presentations that Persuade

Persuasive presentations have the following features, they:



### Stimulate

When you focus on stimulation as the goal of your speech, you want to reinforce existing beliefs, intensify them, and bring them to the forefront. By presenting facts, you will reinforce existing beliefs, intensify them, and bring the issue to the surface. You might consider the foundation of common ground and commonly held beliefs, and then introduce information that a mainstream audience may not be aware of that supports that common ground as a strategy to stimulate.



### Convince

In a persuasive speech, the goal is to change the attitudes, beliefs, values, or judgments of your audience. If we look back at the idea of motive, in this speech the prosecuting attorney would try to convince the jury members that the defendant is guilty beyond reasonable doubt. He or she may discuss motive, present facts, all with the goal to convince the jury to believe or find that his or her position is true.

Audience members will also hold beliefs and are likely to involve their own personal bias. Your goal is to get them to agree with your position, so you will need to plan a range of points and examples to get audience members to consider your topic.



### Include a Call to Action

Figure 8.1 below shows the “Reduce, reuse, recycle, repeat” slogan. The recycle movement is one of the most successful and persuasive call to action campaigns of the past twenty or more years in Canada (Babooram & Wang, 2007).



Figure 8.1. Reduce, reuse, recycle, repeat slogan.

[“Reduce-reuse-recycle-repeat”](#) by Phil Gibbs is shared with a CC BY 2.0 Generic license

When you call an audience to action with a speech, you are indicating that your purpose is not to stimulate interest, reinforce and accentuate beliefs, or convince them of a viewpoint. Instead, you want your listeners to do something, to change their behaviour in some way.

If you were a showroom salesperson at Toyota for example, you might include the concept that the purchase of a Prius hybrid model is a call to action against issues of global warming related to fossil fuel consumption. The economics, even at current gas prices, might not completely justify the difference in price between a hybrid and a non-hybrid car. However, if you as a salesperson can make a convincing argument that choosing a hybrid car is the right and responsible decision, you may be more likely to get the customer to act. The persuasive speech that focuses on action often generates curiosity, clarifies a problem, and as we have seen, proposes a range of solutions. The key difference here is there is a clear link to action associated with the solutions.

**Solutions** lead us to considering the goals of action. These goals address the question, “What do I want the audience to do as a result of being engaged by my speech?” The goals of action include adoption, discontinuance, deterrence, and continuance.

**Adoption** means the speaker wants to persuade the audience to take on a new way of thinking, or adopt a new idea. Examples could include buying a new product, or deciding to donate blood. The key is that the audience member adopts, or takes on, a new view, action, or habit.

**Discontinuance** involves the speaker persuading the audience to stop doing something what they have been doing. Rather than take on a new habit or action, the speaker is asking the audience member to stop an existing behaviour or idea.

**Deterrence** is a call to action that focuses on persuading the audience not to start something if they haven't already started. The goal of action would be to deter, or encourage the audience members to refrain from starting or initiating the behavior.

Finally, with **continuance**, the speaker aims to persuade the audience to continue doing what they have been doing, such as keep buying a product, or staying in school to get an education.

A speaker may choose to address more than one of these goals of action, depending on the audience analysis. If the audience is largely agreeable and supportive, you may find continuance to be one goal, while adoption is secondary.

Goals in call to action speeches serve to guide you in the development of solution steps. Solution steps involve suggestions or ways the audience can take action after your speech. Audience members appreciate a clear discussion of the problem in a persuasive speech, but they also appreciate solutions.

## Increase Consideration

In a speech designed to increase consideration, you want to entice your audience to consider alternate viewpoints on the topic you have chosen. Audience members may hold views that are hostile in relation to yours, or perhaps they are neutral and simply curious about your topic. Returning to the Toyota salesperson example, you might be able to compare and contrast competing cars and show that the costs over ten years are quite similar. But the Prius has additional features that are the equivalent of a bonus, including high gas mileage. You might describe tax incentives for ownership, maintenance schedules and costs, and resale value. Your arguments and their support aim at increasing the audience's consideration of your position. You won't be asking for action in this presentation, but a corresponding increase of consideration may lead the customer to that point at a later date.

## Develop Tolerance of Alternate Perspectives

Finally, you may want to help your audience develop tolerance of alternate perspectives and viewpoints. Perhaps your audience, as in the previous example, is interested in purchasing a car and you are the lead salesperson on that model. As you listen, and do your informal audience analysis, you may learn that horsepower and speed are important values to this customer. You might raise the issue of torque versus horsepower and indicate that the "uumph" you feel as you start a car off the



line is torque. Many hybrid and even electric vehicles have great torque, as their systems involve fewer parts and less friction than a corresponding internal combustion-transaxle system. Your goal is to help your audience develop tolerance, but not necessarily acceptance, of alternate perspectives. By starting from common ground, and introducing a related idea, you are persuading your audience to consider an alternate perspective.

A persuasive speech may stimulate thought, convince, call to action, increase consideration, or develop tolerance of alternate perspectives.



## 54. Making An Argument

When people argue, they are engaged in conflict and it's usually not pretty. It sometimes appears that way because people resort to fallacious arguments or false statements, or they simply do not treat each other with respect. They get defensive, try to prove their own points, and fail to listen to each other.

But this should not be what happens in persuasive argument. Instead, when you make an argument in a persuasive speech, you will want to present your position with logical points, supporting each point with appropriate sources. You will want to give your audience every reason to perceive you as an ethical and trustworthy speaker. Your audience will expect you to treat them with respect, and to present your argument in way that does not make them defensive. Contribute to your credibility by building sound arguments and using strategic arguments with skill and planning.

Stephen Toulmin's (1958) rhetorical strategy focuses on three main elements, shown in Table 8.1 as claim, data, and warrant.

*Table 8.1 Rhetorical strategy.*

Element	Description	Example
Claim	Your statement of belief or truth	It is important to spay or neuter your pet.
Data	Your supporting reasons for the claim	Millions of unwanted pets are euthanized annually.
Warrant	You create the connection between the claim and the supporting reasons	Pets that are spayed or neutered do not reproduce, preventing the production of unwanted animals.

This three-part rhetorical strategy is useful in that it makes the claim explicit, clearly illustrating the relationship between the claim and the data, and allows the listener to follow the speaker's reasoning. You may have a good idea or point, but your audience will be curious and want to know how you arrived at that claim or viewpoint. The warrant often addresses the inherent and often unspoken question, "Why is this data so important to your topic?" and helps you illustrate relationships between information for your audience. This model can help you clearly articulate it for your audience.

### Appealing to Emotions

Emotions are a psychological and physical reaction, such as fear or anger, to stimuli that we experience as a feeling. Our feelings or emotions directly impact our own point of view and readiness to

communicate, but also influence how, why, and when we say things. Emotions influence not only how you say what you say, but also how you hear and what you hear. At times, emotions can be challenging to control. Emotions will move your audience, and possibly even move you, to change or act in certain ways.



Be wary of overusing emotional appeals, or misusing emotional manipulation in presentations and communication. You may encounter emotional resistance from your audience. Emotional resistance involves getting tired, often to the point of rejection, of hearing messages that attempt to elicit an emotional response. Emotional appeals can wear out the audience's capacity to receive the message.

The use of an emotional appeal may also impair your ability to write persuasively or effectively. Never use a personal story, or even a story of someone you do not know, if the inclusion of that story causes you to lose control. While it's important to discuss relevant and sometimes emotionally difficult topics, you need to assess your own relationship to the message. Your documents should not be an exercise in therapy and you will sacrifice ethos and credibility, even your effectiveness, if you become angry or distraught because you are really not ready to discuss an issue you've selected.

Now that you've considered emotions and their role in a speech in general and a speech to persuade specifically, it's important to recognize the principles about emotions in communication that serve you well when speaking in public. DeVito (2003) offers five key principles to acknowledge the role emotions play in communication and offer guidelines for their expression.

## Emotions Are Universal

Emotions are a part of every conversation or interaction that you have. Whether or not you consciously experience them while communicating with yourself or others, they influence how you communicate. By recognizing that emotions are a component in all communication interactions, you can place emphasis on understanding both the content of the message and the emotions that influence how, why, and when the content is communicated.

Expression of emotions is important, but requires the three Ts: tact, timing, and trust. If you find you are upset and at risk of being less than diplomatic, or the timing is not right, or you are unsure about the level of trust, then consider whether you can effectively communicate your emotions. By considering these three Ts, you can help yourself express your emotions more effectively.

## Emotions Are Communicated Verbally and Nonverbally

You communicate emotions not only through your choice of words but also through the manner in which you say those words. The words themselves communicate part of your message, but the nonverbal cues, including inflection, timing, space, and paralanguage can modify or contradict your spoken message. Be aware that emotions are expressed in both ways and pay attention to how verbal and nonverbal messages reinforce and complement each other.

## Emotional Expression Can Be Good and Bad

Expressing emotions can be a healthy activity for a relationship and build trust. It can also break down trust if expression is not combined with judgment. We're all different, and we all experience emotions, but how we express our emotions to ourselves and others can have a significant impact on our relationships. Expressing frustrations may help the audience realize your point of view and see things as they have never seen them before. However, expressing frustrations combined with blaming can generate defensiveness and decrease effective listening. When you're expressing yourself, consider the audience's point of view, be specific about your concerns, and emphasize that your relationship with your listeners is important to you.

## Emotions Are Often Contagious

It is important to recognize that we influence each other with our emotions, positively and negatively. Your emotions as the speaker can be contagious, so use your enthusiasm to raise the level of interest in your topic. Conversely, you may be subject to "catching" emotions from your audience.

In summary, everyone experiences emotions, and as a persuasive speaker, you can choose how to express emotion and appeal to the audience's emotions.

## Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is to oral communication what a Twitter message (limited to 140 characters) is to written communication. An elevator speech is a presentation that persuades the listener in less than thirty seconds, or around a hundred words.

## Creating an Elevator Speech

An elevator speech does not have to be a formal event, though it can be. An elevator speech is not a full sales pitch and should not get bloated with too much information. The idea is not to rattle off as much information as possible in a short time, nor to present a memorized thirty-second advertising message, but rather to give a relaxed and genuine “nutshell” summary of one main idea. The emphasis is on brevity, but a good elevator speech will address several key questions:

1. What is the topic, product or service?
2. Who are you?
3. Who is the target market? (if applicable)
4. What is the revenue model? (if applicable)
5. What or who is the competition and what are your advantages?

The following are the five key parts of your message:

- Attention Statement – Hook + information about you
- Introduction – What you offer
- Body – Benefits; what's in it for the listener
- Conclusion – Example that sums it up
- Residual Message – Call for action

## Example:

**Person you've just met:** How are you doing?

**You:** I'm great, how are you? [ensure that your conversation partner feels the conversation is a two-way street and that they might be interested in hearing your elevator speech]

**Person you've just met:** Very well thanks, what brings you to this conference?

**You:** Glad you asked. I'm with (X Company) and we just received this new (product x)—it is amazing. It beats the competition hands down for a third of the price. Smaller, faster, and less expensive make it a winner. It's already a sales leader. Hey, if you know anyone who might be interested, call me! (Hands business card to the listener as visual aid). So what brings you to this conference? [be a good listener]

You often don't know when opportunity to inform or persuade will present itself, but with an elevator speech, you are prepared!

## 55. Speaking Ethically and Avoiding Fallacies



What comes to mind when you think of speaking to persuade? Perhaps the idea of persuasion may bring to mind propaganda and issues of manipulation, deception, intentional bias, bribery, and even coercion. Each element relates to persuasion, but in distinct ways. We can recognize that each of these elements in some ways has a negative connotation associated with it. Why do you think that deceiving your audience, bribing a judge, or coercing people to do something against their wishes is wrong? These tactics violate our sense of fairness, freedom, and ethics.

**Manipulation** involves the management of facts, ideas or points of view to play upon inherent insecurities or emotional appeals to one's own advantage. Your audience expects you to treat them with respect, and deliberately manipulating them by means of fear, guilt, duty, or a relationship is unethical.

In the same way, **deception** involves the use of lies, partial truths, or the omission of relevant information to deceive your audience. No one likes to be lied to, or made to believe something that is not true. Deception can involve intentional bias, or the selection of information to support your position while framing negatively any information that might challenge your belief.

**Bribery** involves the giving of something in return for an expected favour, consideration, or privi-

lege. It circumvents the normal protocol for personal gain, and again is a strategy that misleads your audience.

**Coercion** is the use of power to compel action. You make someone do something they would not choose to do freely. While you may raise the issue that the ends justify the means, and you are “doing it for the audience’s own good,” recognize the unethical nature of coercion.

## Eleven Points for Speaking Ethically

In his book *Ethics in Human Communication* Johannesen (1996) offers eleven points to consider when speaking to persuade. His main points reiterate many of the points across this chapter and should be kept in mind as you prepare, and present, your persuasive message.

Do not:

- use false, fabricated, misrepresented, distorted or irrelevant evidence to support arguments or claims
- intentionally use unsupported, misleading, or illogical reasoning
- represent yourself as informed or an “expert” on a subject when you are not
- use irrelevant appeals to divert attention from the issue at hand
- ask your audience to link your idea or proposal to emotion-laden values, motives, or goals to which it is actually not related
- deceive your audience by concealing your real purpose, by concealing self-interest, by concealing the group you represent, or by concealing your position as an advocate of a viewpoint
- distort, hide, or misrepresent the number, scope, intensity, or undesirable features of consequences or effects
- use “emotional appeals” that lack a supporting basis of evidence or reasoning.
- oversimplify complex, gradation-laden situations into simplistic, two-valued, either-or, polar views or choices
- pretend certainty where tentativeness and degrees of probability would be more accurate
- advocate something which you yourself do not believe in

In your speech to persuade, consider honesty and integrity as you assemble your arguments. Your audience will appreciate your thoughtful consideration of more than one view, your understanding of the complexity, and you will build your ethos, or credibility, as you present your document. Be careful not to stretch the facts, or assemble them only to prove yourself, and instead prove the argument on its own merits. Deception, coercion, intentional bias, manipulation and bribery should have no place in your speech to persuade.



## Avoiding Fallacies

Fallacies are another way of saying false logic. These tricks deceive your audience with their style, drama, or pattern, but add little to your speech in terms of substance and can actually detract from your effectiveness. In Table 8.2 below, eight classical fallacies are described. Learn to recognize these fallacies so they can't be used against you, and so that you can avoid using them with your audience.

Table 8.2 Eight fallacies

Fallacy	Definition	Example
1. Red Herring	Any diversion intended to distract attention from the main issue, particularly by relating the issue to a common fear.	It's not just about the death penalty; it's about the victims and their rights. You wouldn't want to be a victim, but if you were, you'd want justice.
2. Straw Man	A weak argument set up to be easily refuted, distracting attention from stronger arguments	What if we released criminals who commit murder after just a few years of rehabilitation? Think of how unsafe our streets would be then!
3. Begging the Question	Claiming the truth of the very matter in question, as if it were already an obvious conclusion.	We know that they will be released and unleashed on society to repeat their crimes again and again.
4. Circular Argument	The proposition is used to prove itself. Assumes the very thing it aims to prove. Related to begging the question.	Once a killer, always a killer.
5. Ad Populum	Appeals to a common belief of some people, often prejudicial, and states everyone holds this belief. Also called the Bandwagon Fallacy, as people "jump on the bandwagon" of a perceived popular view.	Most people would prefer to get rid of a few "bad apples" and keep our streets safe.
6. Ad Hominem	"Argument against the man" instead of against his message. Stating that someone's argument is wrong solely because of something about the person rather than about the argument itself.	Our representative is a drunk and philanderer. How can we trust him on the issues of safety and family?
7. Non Sequitur	"It does not follow." The conclusion does not follow from the premises. They are not related.	Since the liberal anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s, we've seen an increase in convicts who got let off death row.
8. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc	"After this, therefore because of this," also called a coincidental correlation. It tries to establish a cause-and-effect relationship where only a correlation exists.	Violent death rates went down once they started publicizing executions.



Avoid false logic and make a strong case or argument for your proposition. Finally, here is a five-step motivational checklist to keep in mind as you bring it all together:

1. Get their attention
2. Identify the need
3. Satisfy the need
4. Present a vision or solution
5. Take action

This simple organizational pattern can help you focus on the basic elements of a persuasive message when time is short and your performance is critical. Speaking to persuade should not involve manipulation, coercion, false logic, or other unethical techniques.

## 56. Conclusion



After reading this chapter, and returning to Dhavit's challenge related to creating a persuasive presentation, how might Dhavit plan and deliver his information to help persuade some of his colleagues to stop smoking?

### Check Your Understanding



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## Additional Resources

Justthink.org promotes critical thinking skills and awareness of the impact of images in the media among young people. [http://www.change.org/organizations/just\\_think\\_foundation](http://www.change.org/organizations/just_think_foundation)

Visit this site for a video and other resources about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. [http://www.abraham-maslow.com/m\\_motivation/Hierarchy\\_of\\_Needs.asp](http://www.abraham-maslow.com/m_motivation/Hierarchy_of_Needs.asp)

Read an informative article on negotiating face-to-face across cultures by Stella Ting-Toomey, [https://www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/forum/past\\_PRF/PRF\\_1999/intercultural-conflict-competence-eastern-and-western-lenses.html](https://www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/forum/past_PRF/PRF_1999/intercultural-conflict-competence-eastern-and-western-lenses.html)

Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides a guide to persuasive speaking strategies. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/04>

Visit the CBC Podcasts page and assess the persuasive message of various programs. <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/podcasts/>

## Glossary

**Adoption** – means the speaker wants to persuade the audience to take on a new way of thinking, or adopt a new idea.

**Authority** – involves referencing experts and expertise.

**Bribery** – involves the giving of something in return for an expected favour, consideration, or privilege.

**Call to action** – you want your listeners to do something, to change their behaviour in some way.

**Claim** – your statement of belief or truth when making an evidence-based argument.

**Coercion** – the use of power to compel action.

**Commitment and Consistency** – means ensuring that you follow through on what you say you will do.

**Consensus** – is the tendency of the individual to follow the lead of the group or peers.

**Continuance** – the speaker aims to persuade the audience to continue doing what they have been doing, such as keep buying a product, or staying in school to get an education.

**Data** – your supporting reasons for a claim when you are making an evidence-based argument.

**Deception** – involves the use of lies, partial truths, or the omission of relevant information to deceive your audience.

**Deterrence** – call to action that focuses on persuading audience not to start something if they haven't already started.

**Discontinuance** – involves the speaker persuading the audience to stop doing something they have been doing.

**Fallacies** – another way of saying false logic. These tricks deceive your audience with their style, drama, or pattern, but add little to your speech in terms of substance and can actually detract from your effectiveness.

**Goals of action (solutions)** – include adoption, discontinuance, deterrence, and continuance.

**Liking** – involves the perception of safety and belonging in communication.

**Manipulation** – involves the management of facts, ideas or points of view to play upon inherent insecurities or emotional appeals to one's own advantage.

**Motivation** – different from persuasion in that it involves the force, stimulus, or influence to bring about change.

**Persuasion** – an act or process of presenting arguments to move, motivate, or change your audience.

**Reciprocity** – is the mutual expectation for exchange of value or service.

**Scarcity** – is the perception of inadequate supply or a limited resource.

**Stimulation** – reinforce existing beliefs, intensify them, and bring them to the forefront.

**Warrant** – you create the connection between a claim and supporting reasons when making an evidence-based argument.

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