Chapter 18
Persuasive Structures
from
PUBLIC SPEAKING: AN IDEA PERSPECTIVE
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General Educational Objectives: This chapter helps you to:
1. identify varying structures used in persuasive speeches.
2. organize speeches consistent with established persuasive patterns.
3. adapt persuasive structures according to circumstances

Specific Testable Objectives: As a result of studying this chapter, you should be able to:
1. Identify six traditional structures for persuasive presentations.
2. Identify four techniques based on psychology that can be adapted to persuasion.
3. define and provide examples of persuasive structures according to type.

. As you learn about each of the following persuasive structures, remember that the one used in an actual speech should fit with both the audience's knowledge and attitudes as well as what is being asked of them. In determining the structure of a speech clearly designed to persuade, Also, think in terms of steps one and four of the general motivational model shown in Chapter 13. In each of the following patterns, there is a section for tapping the motives of the audience and another section designed to allow the speaker to assist the audience to deal constructively with the energy generated when their motives are activated. The right structure is the one that helps you best to accomplish both of these tasks.

Problem-Solution
A simple way to structure a persuasive speech is to first present the problem and then provide a solution. The views of the audience will dictate the amount of time spent on both the problem and solution portion of the structure.
If the audience in general sees the issue as something in need of change, then an effective structure would be to present key consequences of the problem so as to reinforce the topic as serious and establish your agreement with the audience that the problem needs correction. Then, proportionally more time would to be spent presenting the proposed solution. If the topic is relatively new to the audience, more time will be required establishing the nature and impacts of the problem.
The difficulty of the solution and anticipated reaction to it are key considerations in its development. However, even simple solutions require

inclusion of all details that could impact its successful completion. If the audience is receptive to taking action, solution development will require identification of the key steps and the action required for each. If the audience could find the steps themselves objectionable, assurances would need to accompany the instruction. In either care, the speaker must clearly link the solution to the problem to show how the problem will be corrected without creating any serious new problems.

For example, if you want to convince more people to donate their body organs in the case of accidental death, little time would be needed to establish that the lack of organ donation is a problem. The primary concern would be to show the problem as relevant to the audience. Linking to their motives, most likely their sentiments, would be required. Then, after the problem has been related to them, you would need to develop what they could do. These instructions would need to help them understand the actions required—simply signing the back of the driver's license in most cases would be inadequate to ensure the action is taken once the person is dead.   Loved ones would need to know and accept his or her desire. The speaker would need to include means to ensure family members, key associates and emergency personnel are aware of the authorization so they can immediately take the needed steps. In other words, the solution needs to be carefully developed even for a solution as specific as this one.

Still, the problem-solution structure is the most simple and easiest to use. You need to explain why something is wrong and suggest a way to correct it. In some cases, as where subtlety is desired, it may be desirable to present the solution first and then help the audience see that the information may have value to them in solving a problem. Although the order may be changed, it remains the same pattern, as is true of the other patterns below.

Need – Plan – Benefits

If the topic is a bit more personal you might wisely select a need-plan-benefits structure for your ideas. In this arrangement, as in the problem-solution structure, time must be spent helping the audience see the need for action as it relates to them. This section should discuss goals the audience has in such a way as to motive them to want to change in order to better reach their goals. In so doing, the audience should become less comfortable with their present situation. This unhappiness produces the energy needed to help them change. Next, some time would be spent on the proposed plan that would help them use the energy in a constructive way to reach their goal. Finally, some time would be used explaining the benefits of the proposed plan. Since action is desired from them, the audience would want to be reassured not only that the plan is desirable, adequate and feasible, but that it would resolve the need in such a way as to produce a better, not worse situation once the need is eliminated.

Many people have a goal to maintain their appearance during the balding years. So, for people in and approaching that age, linking the loss of hair to their need to continue to look young might be easy. However, gaining acceptance for a plan to replace the hair with artificial hair could be more difficult. The audience

would most likely be aware of other ways of dealing with the problem. They would recognize that all solutions have costs. Your task would be to convince them that artificial hair does satisfy the need at an affordable cost. Moreover, in the benefits section, before buying wigs, the listeners would want to see that it not only meets the need but also has the benefit of making them look better, not worse.

Cause—Effect—Proposal

Similar in structure to the need-plan-benefits arrangement, a cause-effect-proposal structure is better for topics when the cause, the effect and/or the relationship between the two are in question. Therefore, before the proposal is presented, the speech will stress the validity of the causes and the effects in establishing a link between the two. Once that link is established, the acceptance of the proposal to remove the cause is enhanced.

As has been noted for years, a cause must be sufficient as well as necessary to generate any particular effect. And similarly, an effect can only be claimed if the cause is sufficient and necessary. Thus, there often exists the need for removing doubts about causes and effects as well as increasing the acceptance of the proposal. As with the previous structures, the development of the proposal would need to be sufficiently clear and detailed to permit the needed action by the audience.

Advantages – Disadvantages – Suggestions

If the topic is controversial, but enough people agree that there is a problem and a proposal is already being considered, you will need to use a structure where both advantages and disadvantages to the proposal are carefully addressed. Once you have shared your best ideas about the advantages and disadvantages to the proposal, you will present suggestions. These suggestions may vary widely depending on the audience. For audiences which initially agree with you, these suggests may well resemble a specific plan of action. Where the audiences are less certain, the suggestions may provide fewer directions. Of course, since it is a persuasive speech, you will want the suggestions to help the audience to make the best decision.

Often this organization pattern is used in what is termed a *pseudo-informative speech.* In pseudo-informative speeches, speakers disguise their motive to persuade. When the advantages-disadvantages-suggestions pattern is used in this manner, the speaker supports well the advantages, minimizes the disadvantages (or vice versa) and in the suggestions reveals the course of action which the speaker hopes the audience has already selected. A pseudo-informative speech is best employed when the speaker has high credibility with the audience, or the audience tends to be supportive of the intended course of action or both.

Comparative Advantages

You might select the comparative-advantages structure to compare your proposal with the status quo. The pattern does not require the establishment of a

problem. As is often the case in individual decisions, audiences can be persuaded to take action simply because it will help them to improve.   Typically, the proposal is presented first; however, if the audience is already involved with the topic, *advantages* can be presented first encouraging the audience to think and wonder about how the advantages might be achieved. The focus of the speech will be to compare the results of the proposal with present conditions. The structure stresses key ways the proposal results in a more desirable and rewarding situation.

Monroe Motivated Sequence

The motivated-sequence is a popular structure. It provides steps for addressing each element in the process. It begins with the *attention step*, something we covered in Chapter 8 as the primary purpose for introductions. Next the motivated sequence has the *need step*. In the need step the speaker seeks to establish that there is a need worthy of the audience's time and attention. This will involve evoking motives that aren't now being satisfied. Once that is accomplished, the speaker moves to the *solution step*. Here, as in other structures, the plan or proposal that will help the members fulfill their motives is presented. Next, a speech that follows the motivated sequence presents the *visualization step*. That is where either positive outcomes from the proposed solution or negative consequences of inaction are presented. The key is to help the audience actually create a vision of producing an improved condition through the implementation of the course of action. The visualization step provides an additional opportunity for the speaker to help the audience be prepared to constructively use the energy created in the need step. Because visualization has psychological impact, this approach has been termed a psychological organization. Finally, the *action step* is where the speaker asks the audience to do something.   This step will most likely serve as the conclusion in what is termed a *call for action.*

Other Psychological Approaches

Some methods of presenting ideas come from an understanding of how the mind functions. Since the mind is encouraged to action by positive thoughts, one method is for the first section of the speech to stress positive ideas with which the audience can agree. Sales personnel often start by praising something about the customer. Once the positive mood is established, the speaker shifts to areas (the proposal) where she or he hopes the audience will follow in that same mood. If this is successful, the approach is termed the *yes-yes* method. If resistance is anticipated, the speaker may suggest potential problems with the proposal that the audience might have already thought and then introduce a third section that contains arguments to counter the resistance; then the approach is termed; *yes-yes-but* method.

Two contrasting approaches share the word "door" in their titles. The first, *foot in the door*, is similar to the *yes-yes* approach, but instead of focusing on content of agreement, the first section focuses on simple courses of action. Once the audience accepts the need to take some small action, they are then

more willing to accept the more demanding steps that are needed. The second, *door in face,* first asks the audience for something that members reject as unacceptable. Once they mentally reject that course of action, to not appear to be totally negative, they are more likely to accept the second request. Both these approaches have support in psychology, but obviously they work best for audiences that have some willingness to be supportive.

Summary

In this chapter we have considered six speech patterns that have traditionally been used in persuasive speeches plus four methods from psychology that can be adapted to speeches. Within each pattern, some consideration has been given to factors influencing their use.

Key Source:

Monroe, A. H. (1955). *Principles and types of speech communication.* . Chicago: Scott Foreman.