

Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies
Internationally Educated Professionals Bridging Program



Professional Communication in a Canadian Context

Persuasive Writing



redefine THE POSSIBLE.





Objectives

- To examine the key elements of persuasive writing
- To understand the power of motivation
- To recognize and reduce resistance
- Use persuasive language



Key elements of persuasive writing





Motivate your reader

- Assess your reader's priorities
- Focus on reader benefits
- Quantify gains (financial + other)
- Tie action to timeline and outcome



Gains/Benefits

Financial

- Increased sales
- Increased profits
- Lower costs
- Savings over time
- Fee avoidance
- Discounts
 - group, early-bird, volume

Other

- Better service
- Improved image
- Increased efficiency
- More convenience
- Improved skills
- Simplified process



Recognize and reduce resistance

- Anticipate reader's response
- Acknowledge costs (financial + other)
- Identify obstacles + offer solutions
- Make “yes” easy
- Maintain a positive approach



Use persuasive language

- Be clear, direct and confident
- Position words for maximum effect
 - The first and last words in a sentence
 - The first and last sentences in a paragraph
- Use the active voice
- Use “I” or “we”
- Choose transitional expressions carefully
- Frame messages positively



Types of persuasive writing

- Requests
- Complaints/claims
- Negative response to complaints/claims
- Sales
- Suggestions
- Proposals



Requests

I am writing with reference to our contract with you for the preventive maintenance services we provide on your Qwikcopy printers. According to the terms of the current contract (No. SC234), dated May 3, 20xx, we are required to perform monthly inspection and maintenance on the 15th of every month. Unfortunately, almost all of our clients ask that we perform maintenance between the 5th and the 25th of each month, so our technicians are really busy for 20 days, but have no work for 10 days. Therefore, we were wondering if you would give approval for us to move your inspection date to the 29th of each month ...



Restructure the Request

- Main message
 - What do you want?
- Reason
 - Why do you need it?
 - What are the relevant circumstances?
- Details
 - How will this work?
 - What are the benefits/costs?
- Outcome
 - What do I have to do next? When?
 - Why should I?



Complaints

I can't understand why you people can't make anything that works right. I bought your Quikcook microwave, model 123, two years ago and in that time it has been in the repair shop 4 times - probably more than it has been in my home!! First it burned the food and then it wouldn't cook it. I have spent almost as much as it cost to fix it. So you had better come and pick it up, fix it properly, and bring it back, all at no cost to me!!!



Restructure and revise

- What is the problem + what do you want the reader to do?
 - Bottom line in broad strokes
- Background
 - What are the circumstances?
- Details
 - What are the specific events/problems?
 - Give dates and documents
- Outcome
 - What exactly do you want the reader to do?



Responding to complaints

- Positive response
 - Apologizes for the issue
 - Offers logical explanation of event (reason)
 - Informs the reader of the remedy
 - Indicates timeline
- Negative response
 - Acknowledges the issues, but responds clearly and directly
 - Tries to find a “yes” in the “no”
 - Persuades the reader that he/she has been treated fairly and respectfully



Respond to the complaint

- Half of the class must respond positively
- Half of the class must respond negatively
- Exchange messages and discuss



Sales

- Command attention
 - A brief, thought-provoking statement
- Create interest
 - Shows WIIFM
- Arouse desire + establish conviction
 - Describes appealing features
 - Convinces reader of product value
- Encourage action
 - Tells how to get the product
- Back-up
 - Brochures, leaflets, etc.



Advertising message

Dear Mr. Baxter,

Renew before May 1st - Beat the HST and get 1 free month added to your AGO membership!*

Renew your Family/Dual membership at the Art Gallery of Ontario before midnight on April 30, 2010 and you will get 1 FREE month added to your membership - that's 13 months for the price of 12!

You can renew online here. Your membership number is 3029817. Please note: when you renew online it will not show the additional month - but don't worry, we'll add it on when we process your renewal and it will be reflected on the expiry date on your card(s).

Being an AGO member is more exciting than ever – to renew and get 1 FREE month click here - Act fast - this special offer expires on April 30, 2010 at midnight.

Sincerely,
Mary Klein

*As of May 1, 2010, HST must be collected for services provided on or after July 1.



Suggestions

Right now, we have department meetings every Monday morning, but many people are finding it difficult to attend them because with the new flextime schedule, they don't all have to be in the office at 9 a.m. every Monday. Also, many people use their vacation days to take longer weekends, especially in the summer, so maybe it would be better if we had our weekly meetings on Tuesdays mornings instead. Then more people would attend and nothing would fall through the cracks. What do you think?



Revise the Suggestion

- Main Message
 - What do you suggest?
- Reason
 - What circumstances created the need?
- Details
 - How would it work?
 - What are the benefits/costs?
 - What are the solutions?
- Action
 - What do we do next to make it happen? When?



Proposals

- Summary
 - What needs to be done, briefly
- Background
 - The circumstances that make this necessary
- Details
 - Description of the proposed idea or plan
 - Evaluation of the proposal's viability
- Action
 - Request for approval
- Attachments
 - schedules, spreadsheets, diagrams, etc.



Conclusions

To be persuasive, you must

- Be clear about what you want
- Consider the situation from the reader's perspective
- Demonstrate specific value
- Make compliance easy
- Use positive language