

## Chapter 9: Structuring and Ordering Persuasive Messages

### Key Terms and Concepts

rhetoric	primacy and recency effects
dispositio	experiential vs. non-experiential products
implicit versus explicit conclusions	Inoculation Theory
gain-framed versus loss-framed	inoculation strategy/defense
risk aversion	supportive strategy/defense
present- vs. future-minded people	cultural truisms
quantity versus quality of arguments	one-sided versus two-sided messages
Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)	refutational versus nonrefutational messages
central processing	forewarning
peripheral processing	strength model of self-control
evidence	distraction
repetition	psychological reactance
Mere Exposure Theory	bracketing (Box 9.2)
anticlimax, climax, and pyramidal order	learning theory

### Chapter Summary

I. Persuaders using an “explicit conclusions approach” directly state the claim in their messages, while those using an “implicit conclusions approach” allow their audience to draw their own conclusions after hearing a message.

- A. Explicit conclusions may work best when receivers are uninvolved or unable to draw their own conclusions.
- B. Implicit conclusions may work best when receivers are involved and intelligent enough to draw their own conclusions.

II. Because people tend to be risk averse, loss-framed messages tend to be more persuasive than gain-framed messages, although there are exceptions.

- A. Present-minded people respond more positively to loss-framed messages,
- B. Future-minded people are equally persuaded by gain- and loss-framed messages.
- C. Receivers who perceive disease-detecting behaviors as risky are more likely to respond to loss-framed messages (“If you don’t detect cancer early, you narrow your options for treatment”).
- D. Receivers who perceive disease-preventing behavior as less risky are more likely motivated by gain-framed messages (“Eating a lot of veggies will help you maintain your good health”).

III. People who are not involved and are unlikely to scrutinize a message are most persuaded by a large number of arguments, while their counterparts are most persuaded by a small number of quality arguments.

- A. According to the ELM, receivers who carefully scrutinize persuasive messages are processing them through the central route to persuasion.
- B. When receivers do not have the ability or motivation to scrutinize a message, they still have the possibility of being persuaded through the peripheral route to persuasion.

IV. As a general rule, evidence facilitates persuasion.

A. Evidence sometimes functions as a peripheral cue, but is most effective when receivers rely on central processing.

B. The amount of evidence, type of proofs, and level of receiver involvement are all factors that affect persuasion.

C. Statistical evidence tends to be more persuasive than anecdotal evidence, especially when receiver involvement is high, but using both types of evidence together may be the best approach of all.

V. Repeating a message may facilitate or hinder persuasion.

A. Mere Exposure Theory argues that people respond favorably to familiar stimuli and suggests that repeated exposure to a message should facilitate persuasion.

B. However, research has shown that repeated exposure to a personally irrelevant message does not increase the message's persuasiveness, while repeated exposure to a personally relevant message with a strong argument does enhance the message's persuasiveness.

VI. Placing strong arguments at the beginning (anticlimax order) or end (climax order) of a message is more persuasive than placing strong arguments in the middle of a message (pyramidal order).

A. The channel through which an argument is presented may govern whether strong arguments should go first or last.

B. When arguments are presented through an auditory channel, order is important.

VII. The primacy effect occurs when the first speaker's message is the most persuasive; the recency effect occurs when the second speaker's message is most persuasive.

A. The primacy effect is most likely if there is a time delay between the measurement of persuasive effects and exposure to the first and second speakers' messages.

B. The recency effect is most likely if there is a time delay between the first and second speakers' messages before persuasive effects are measured.

C. Several factors (e.g., the experiential or non-experiential nature of the product being tested) mediate primacy/recency effects.

VIII. Researchers have studied inoculation, supportive strategies, message-sidedness, forewarning, and distraction as means of promoting and/or resisting persuasion.

A. Inoculation and supportive strategies make people more resistant to persuasive messages.

1) An inoculation strategy exposes people to a "weak dose" of an opponent's argument and then refutes it.

2) A supportive strategy provides reasons for why people should continue to believe what they already believe.

3) When used together, inoculation and supportive strategies are more effective at making people resistant to an opponent's message than either an inoculation or supportive strategy alone.

4) Once people have been inoculated against one particular argument, they may be resistant to new and different arguments.

5) (Box 9.1) Inoculation is an effective strategy in preventing teen smoking and in refuting a political opponent's attacks.

B. Messages that contain an argument while also refuting the opponent's argument (i.e., two-sided, refutational arguments) are more persuasive than one-sided arguments or two-sided, nonrefutational arguments.

C. Forewarning people that they are about to be exposed to a persuasive message generally makes them more resistant to persuasion.

1) Forewarning may increase counterarguing and, hence, more resistance.

2) The strength model of self-control suggests that forewarning may brace us to save our cognitive resources, which aids counterarguing and, in turn, resistance.

3) Forewarning may increase psychological reactance and, hence, lead to more resistance.

D. (Box 9.2) The practice of bracketing is an attempt to distract an audience's attention from a political candidate. Such distractions can benefit a speaker, but can also prevent people from scrutinizing a counter-attitudinal message.