Designs for Persuasive Communication

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A professional-level communicator can persuade an audience to hear their message (if you’ve sat through any PowerPoint presentations, you know that just recognizing and remembering the speaker’s main point means they’ve done a pretty good job). A leadership-level communicator can persuade an audience to care about their message. An executive-level communicator persuades his or her audience to act on their message. When you break down your communication into these three variables, it isn’t difficult to analyze this matrix: If the challenge ahead is a high-change, high-involvement presentation, effective persuasive communication addresses the audience’s needs, values, and desires. Audiences respond better to persuasive communication when they feel the person speaking is similar to them in some way, whether it’s in age, occupation or socio-economic status. If you address what’s important to your audience, they’ll see you as someone who is similar to them. Therefore, they should be more receptive to your message, too. What persuades in writing doesn’t necessarily persuade when delivered verbally. For example, you can include numbers and statistics in a written document because readers can take their time interpreting the data. But if you bombard listeners with these same figures during a speech, you may confuse them and lose their attention.