Essay 1

Imagine you were the campaign manager of a political candidate (say, Hillary Clinton or Jeb Bush). From the Chapter's discussion of how to persuade others (how to change their attitudes and behaviors), what strategies might you suggest for your campaign?

As superficial as it may seem, attractive communicators are better at persuading individuals. This is because it creates a positive association with whatever is being marketed. Therefore, if I were the campaign manager of a political candidate, I would make sure that the candidate has their image/appearance straightened out before they attempt to persuade voters (especially on television/other media outputs). Moreover, I would make sure the candidate speaks confidently, quickly, and in a straightforward way, since individuals who use those techniques are seen as more expert than those who speak slower or seem to hesitate more.

In order to avoid seeming biased, the political candidate must present both sides to an issue. Of course, the individual will speak more highly of whatever they are attempting to persuade the public with. The idea is to give the public the sense that the candidate is trustworthy; therefore an attitude change is more likely to occur over time. This is known as the sleeper effect.

The book states, “no matter how good the message is, it will not be effective unless people pay attention to it, understand it, accept it, and incorporate it into their self-concept.” Therefore, strategically, the goal is to make sure the communicator who presents the information to the public is good. Moreover, the information that is being communicated must be tailored so that the public processes it the way we want them to.

The phenomenon of “spontaneous message processing” focuses on the way in which many of us often accept a persuasion attempt because we focus on the most obvious or enjoyable aspect of the ad, rather than the message itself. In other words, if we like the music or think the communicator is cute, we often accept the persuasion without thinking about what is being said at all.

Another technique is to focus on the emotional response. An example of this is an ad that shows pictures that invoke fear in the viewer, such as images of deadly car accidents. In Australia, for example, all cigarette packs have a picture of an individual dying from lung cancer. This gruesome image is meant to decrease smoking. So if I were a campaign manager of a political candidate who was pro gun control, I would incorporate pictures from the school-shootings, in order to convince the public that the right to own and use guns, may be more dangerous than they originally thought.

Tara Hayes

Imagine you were the campaign manager of a political candidate (say, Hillary Clinton or Jeb Bush). From the Chapter's discussion of how to persuade others (how to change their attitudes and behaviors), what strategies might you suggest for your campaign?

By the nature of the process, political candidates are faced with the difficult challenge of winning over the hearts of a certain majority in order to assume a position. In order to successfully execute this daunting process, they must perform a number of persuasion techniques.

First, the book describes attitudes as feelings directed towards an object or objective. Therefore, in the realm of persuasion, a campaign manager should direct the campaign towards certain objectives that the party and the general public care about. For example, take a stand on social, economic, and political issues that go along with people’s attitudes, and hopefully, as a result of the principle of attitude consistency, voters attitudes towards a candidate should predict their voting behavior. Attitudes like these can also be measured in the form of polls, and if this were my campaign, I would perform a number of these polls on different issues regarding my candidate to measure his or her standing against the competition.
Another strategy I would suggest as a campaign manager would be to choose an effective communicator and an effective style of communicating. The people communicating my candidate’s messages should be attractive, likeable, trustworthy, and an expert on the campaign and political issues in general. In terms of communication style, I would provide a mix of both spontaneous attitude changes and thoughtful attitude changes. I would provide messages that encourage spontaneous attitude changes for the less-educated voters, but more thought provoking attitude changes for the voters who know more about such topics.

In order to maintain the loyalty of my voters and make certain that their attitudes are strong enough to avoid persuasion by my opposing party, I would execute the technique known as inoculation. To do this, I would verbalize some of the key conflicting points of my opponent’s campaign and consistently attack them in order to build up a stronger resistance to them.

The task of employing grassroots means of campaigning is inevitable when it comes to large campaigns like the Presidential Elections. In order to ensure success in this realm, I would execute a number of techniques like the foot-in-the-door technique, the door-in-the-face technique, and the pre-giving technique in order to obtain more support and awareness from the general population.

Molly O’Donnell

Imagine you were the campaign manager of a political candidate (say, Hillary Clinton or Jeb Bush). From the Chapter’s discussion of how to persuade others (how to change their attitudes and behaviors), what strategies might you suggest for your campaign?

The act of persuading individuals in campaign running is a tactic of utmost importance. The best way to do this is to appeal to the largest number of individuals as possible. This can be done through multiple funnels:
1. make the receivers of your message feel good about themselves,
2. make yourself (appear) similar to the message receivers,
3. make yourself appear trustworthy,
4. have expertise in the area you are presenting on,
5. speak quickly and confidently,
6. present both sides of an issue,
7. and make sure you prevent persuasion by your opponent.

Political campaigns provide an interesting approach to the study of attitudes (the presentation of them) and persuasion. The majority of voters in a political campaign have never met the candidate and some have never heard the candidate speak or seen any of the advertisements for the candidate. This presents a uniquely interesting challenge for a campaign manager: not only does the candidate have to present themselves well in person, but they also have to present well on TV, radio, through media, through paid advertisements, and through word of mouth.

As a politician, you are most successful (with regard to voting percentages) if you allow yourself to be put into a category: democrat or republican. This immediately cuts away from your potential voters because their political affiliation inherently disagrees with yours (see #2). It is also challenging because you must appeal to the wishes of the overseeing group for your political affiliation in order to get their recognition for your political campaign. The best solution for this problem is to affiliate with either the democrats or republicans and then do your best to appeal to the other demographics within the wishes of the overseeing group for your political party.

You must know the people within your political party. In order to make your constituents vote for you, you have to make them feel good about themselves. This is a hard task because attributing certain characteristics to such a large group of people can get you into the trouble of alienating certain groups within your political party. To best approach this issue within running a campaign, a campaign manager should do extensive research on the most active groups within the political party and try to best appeal to them while not alienating any other groups.
There are two other components to how you present yourself to your constituents: who you are (your background and expertise) and how you present yourself (communication, trustworthiness). The first part, "who you are" can be completed through education, what your social history has been (which groups you associate with), your previous career history, and your previous political history. This part of the "political equation" is built over time. The second part of how you present yourself to your constituents is how you present yourself. This is a more immediate piece of the "political equation." These factors, your communication skills, trustworthiness, and personality, are largely built in the year or so leading up to your campaign and during the duration of your campaign. These are no less important than any other piece of your campaign and can be easily misconstrued by the media and thus must be closely paid attention to.

Jennifer Rice

Essay 2

Unfortunately, a lot of people in our society are heterosexist: they are prejudiced against people who happen to be gay, lesbian, queer or transgender. Based on your reading of the methods to CHANGE ATTITUDES, what strategies might you suggest to reduce an individual's--or a population's--anti-gay prejudice?

Principles of self-perception suggest that to create true attitude change, we should avoid using too much punishment or too much reward. Because of this statement, if we were to try to reduce an individual's anti-gay prejudice, we must use a more subtle approach.

First we should try to increase their self-awareness of their cognitive dissonance. By having them reflect on how they treat non-heteronormative individuals, they may realize that they feel extreme discomfort about the inconsistency by which they treat others with based on their gender identity. Although this approach can result in possible denial/ blaming their attitude on the fault of non-heteronormative individuals, making prejudiced individuals aware of their cognitive dissonance may result in them trying to change their attitudes toward non-heteronormative people.

Another method we might try to reduce an individual's anti-gay prejudice is the foot-in-the-door technique. This is a persuasion attempt in which we first get the target to accept a rather minor request, then we ask for a larger request. This method is more tangible than abstract and reflective like the first method of realizing cognitive dissonance. But it is trickier to execute, as we must identify requests that would change their attitudes toward non-heteronormative individuals. Perhaps our small request would be to put a gay pride sticker on their laptops; our larger request would be to ask them to join the LGBTQ movement as an ally. Hopefully, these demonstrations would inspire the prejudiced individuals to keep more of an open mind toward those whom they are not similar to.

Kayla Degala-Paraiso

Unfortunately, a lot of people in our society are heterosexist: they are prejudiced against people who happen to be gay, lesbian, queer or transgender. Based on your reading of the methods to CHANGE ATTITUDES, what strategies might you suggest to reduce an individual's--or a population's--anti-gay prejudice?
Reducing a prejudice towards heterosexuals is something that today’s society truly needs to exert more energy towards. A large portion of society is thought of in a lesser light than others simply due to sexual preference.

One method to change this attitude would be to present more thoughtful messages so that processing occurs at a slower rate and creates a larger impact for the audience. These messages in the form of advertising or community outreach events would provoke contemplation about equality and other aspects of society, and in turn, require the audience to think about their attitude towards different groups.

Another method of changing this mindset is to choose members of the community that are respected to display such messages. Celebrities, political leaders, well known role models, all of these people have the ability to reach a wide range of audiences. These communicators would be effective in expanding the message of anti-gay prejudice.

One more method to change this mindset would be to change people’s attitudes by changing behavior. For example, if more heterosexuals filled leadership roles without being discriminated against, exposure to that population would be drastically increased, and therefore, that population would be less separated from society and attitudes of gay prejudice would likely diminish.

Molly O’Donnell