

Psychographic Factors to Consider

Brief: Understanding the psychographic factors of an audience can give you a general sense of their psychological makeup, including their values, beliefs, attitudes, and needs.

Learning Objective: Understand the factors that comprise audience psychographics.

Key Terms:

- **Psychographics:** The overall psychological makeup of an audience, including the dominant values, beliefs, attitudes, and needs.

What are Psychographics?

The demographics of the audience give the speaker one type of picture based on variables such as age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture, race, and ethnicity; however, there is another equally important picture based on the overall psychological makeup of the audience, referred to as the psychographics of the audience.

Psychographics can be used to describe and develop a profile of the individuals in a given audience. Speakers can also use psychographics to select an audience that meets a certain profile, and then tailor a message specifically to that audience.

What is the current disposition of the audience toward the speech's topic and purpose? If the speaker is attempting to persuade the audience to accept a particular idea or take an action, it is important to understand the starting point. What are the dominant values, beliefs, attitudes, and needs of the audience?

Values

Values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. As such, values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong. "Equal rights for all," "Excellence deserves admiration," and "People should be treated with respect and dignity" are statements of values.

Values tend to influence attitudes and behavior. For example, if someone who values equal rights for all goes to work for an organization that treats its managers much better than its individual contributors, he or she may form the attitude that the company is an unfair place to work. Consequently, this person may not work to his or her ability or may perhaps leave the company. It is likely that if the company had a more egalitarian policy, his or her attitude and behaviors would have been more positive.

The speaker should consider the relationship between his or her own values and the values of members of the audience. Something that the speaker perceives as good, for example, may not be perceived as good by members of the audience.

Beliefs

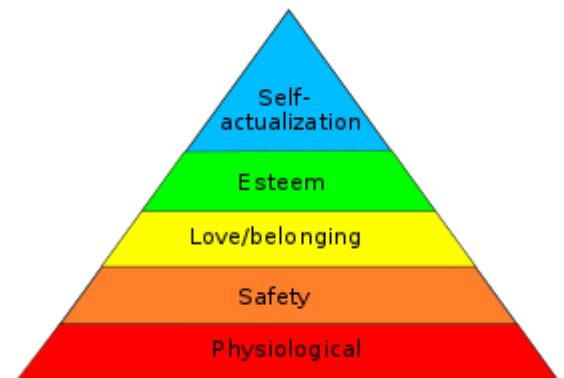
Similarly, speakers should consider the relationship between their own beliefs and the beliefs of their audiences. They should attempt to identify and build upon shared beliefs to get the audience to consider or accept a particular belief that may be different from the ones they hold. A speaker can build upon shared beliefs to establish common ground with the audience before advancing a new idea.

Attitudes

Attitudes can play a very important role in speech preparation. An attitude is a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, event, activities, ideas, or just about anything in the environment. If the speaker knows the audience's attitude toward the topic or thesis before the speech, he or she can make sure to address these attitudes during the speech preparation.

Needs

The speaker should consider if members of the audience need certain things either physically or psychologically. One classical breakdown of needs is Maslow's hierarchy of needs, represented as a pyramid with the more basic needs at the bottom. If the speaker understands where the members of the audience are on Maslow's hierarchy, he or she can show how his or her ideas help the audience satisfy those needs.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

From Concept to Action

Consider your own psychographics. How do your most important values affect your behaviors? What are some of your most important beliefs? Which of your attitudes most strongly influence how you evaluate the world around you? According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which levels of the hierarchy are the focus of most of your attention? How does this focus affect the rest of your life? And, most importantly, how does your psychographic profile influence how you relate to others? Are you able to shift your values, beliefs, attitudes, and focus to perceive life through from someone else's point of view?

OER IMAGE SOURCES:

"MaslowsHierarchyofNeeds." Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MaslowsHierarchyOfNeeds.svg>. Accessed 23 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 4.0]

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"Maslow's hierarchy of needs." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs. Accessed 23 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

"Overall Psychology of Your Audience: Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, & Needs." Lumen Learning. https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/218897/pages/linkedtext54192?module_item_id=5007032. Accessed 15 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]