

Worksheet for Understanding Your Audience

Use this worksheet to assess an audience that you will need to persuade.

Part I: Description of Your Proposal and Its Benefits

What is the idea or proposition that you plan to communicate to your audience?

What do you hope to persuade your audience to do based on that idea or proposition?

List the benefits of your idea or proposition.

Part II: Audience Assessment

- In the first column, list the names of the people who you will need to persuade. These individuals will include the following:
 - Decision makers—individuals who approve or reject your idea
 - Stakeholders—people who are affected by acceptance of your proposal
 - Influencers—people who have access to the stakeholders and decision makers and can sway their opinions
- In the second column, list the benefits that you think each audience member values most.
- In the third column, note how you would gauge each audience member's receptivity to your idea. Which individuals are hostile, supportive, uninterested, uninformed, or neutral?
- In the fourth column, list each audience member's preferred decision-making style. For example, which individuals want a lot of factual information before making a decision? Which ones prefer to analyze other respected individuals' decisions and follow their lead? Which ones tend to feel enthusiastic about new ideas early on but then look for data to support the proposed idea? Which ones, in general, are initially skeptical of others' ideas?

Name	Benefits	Receptivity to Your Idea	Decision-Making Style
Decision Makers			
Stakeholders			
Influencers			

Part III: Action Planning

1. In the first column, copy the names of the individuals just as you listed them in Part II.
2. In the second column, note how you plan to win each audience member's mind. That is, what benefits of your idea will you emphasize? What evidence will you provide to reassure your audience that those benefits are within their reach? What words will you use?
3. In the third column, note how you plan to win each audience member's heart. That is, what vivid descriptions, metaphors, analogies, and stories might you provide to connect with your listeners on an emotional level?
4. In the fourth column, note how you plan to acknowledge resisters' concerns and communicate your understanding of their concerns.

Name	Actions to Win Minds	Actions to Win Hearts	Actions to Deal with Resistance
Decision Makers			
Stakeholders			
Influencers			

Part IV: Activating Triggers and Audience Self-Persuasion

What persuasion triggers might you set in motion before your presentation? For example, if you think the Reciprocity trigger might increase your persuasiveness, what favors or kindnesses might you do for your audience members that would boost the likelihood that they'll support your idea in return?

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How might you activate audience self-persuasion during your presentation? For instance, what disturbing, leading, and rhetorical questions might you pose to encourage listeners to persuade *themselves* of the value of your idea?

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