



eBaby4U

Sustainability Project: Public Health Persuasion Targeting African American Teen Mom

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BORCHERS' 5 OBJECTIVES FOR PERSUADERS IN THE MEDIA AGE*

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FORMING RELATIONSHIPS

- The key point here is that persuaders are no longer focused exclusively or even primarily on the merits of the product/idea/service; instead, they are looking to create a sense of intimacy and credibility with their audience.
- Persuaders engage in communication techniques designed to create an affective bond with their audiences—to cultivate good feeling and a sense of trust. What they want is for audiences to feel a kind of affection and loyalty to them to help cut through the clutter of an overwhelming amount of persuasive messages bombarding the audience at all times in the media age.
- Persuaders in the media age have to show that they share fundamental similarities with their audiences—that they like the same things, value the same things, believe in the same things, so that their audiences will identify with them.

REPETITION

- The key point here is that persuaders in the media age can't count on any kind of captive audience; they have to fight for the audience's attention because it is easier than ever to get a persuasive message out to a large number of people. So with so many persuaders all addressing the public, it can become very easy for messages to get lost.
- Persuaders do things like develop slogans, logos, and taglines—simply synoptic phrases or visual symbols that sum up their identity—so that audiences have an easily understood and recognized “cue” that they can associate with the persuader.
- Persuaders then aim to get that symbol out into the world as frequently and broadly as possible. The more times the logo gets repeated for a public audience, the better the chance that the audience will pay attention to the persuader and the messages the persuader is trying to promote.

ELECTRONIC ELOQUENCE

- This communication theory identifies a new set of standards for persuaders to achieve in the media age in terms of style and presentation. Basically, the theory argues that in the media age, audiences no longer value the types of style and presentation used in traditional public speaking.
- In traditional public speaking, a persuader was considered eloquent if she used a forceful delivery, had a well-reasoned and well-supported case, offered complex thoughts and arguments, and impressed the audience with a clear and logical organization.

- In the media age, that sort of presentation and delivery style no longer are valued by audiences. Instead, persuaders are considered eloquent if they speak in catchy soundbites that are easy to understand and repeat; if they have visually dramatic messages; if they appeal to the emotions of the audience rather than to its reason alone; if they make their messages personal and structured as a story, rather than using impersonal and objective argument.

COMMODITIZATION

- Persuaders in the media age must clearly identify the value of their product, service, or message for the audience. Note that this seems to contradict the first point, that the primary goal is to form relationships. It's not that forming relationships is the only objective, but that commoditization takes a back seat to it.
- In commoditization, the persuader tries to demonstrate to the audience that they will benefit in some direct way if they follow the persuader's message. Even in advertising persuasion, this goes beyond just identifying the instrumental value of a product or service. Persuaders draw on the sense of value that individuals find in identifying with a certain brand or feeling connected with others who are similarly moved by the persuasive message.
- The key point here is that persuaders are relying less on appealing to an audience who will evaluate the objective merits of an idea or message and instead recognize that you have to demonstrate to the audience why the idea or message is valuable to them subjectively.

STORYTELLING

- This is already sort of covered in the theory of electronic eloquence, but Borchers includes it on its own. This is the idea that traditional logical argument doesn't work in the same way in the media age as it did in the era of traditional public speaking. So while audiences of speeches may have been most impressed by carefully structured, complex, linear arguments, media age audiences expect persuaders to structure their messages narratively.
- A good example of this can be found in political campaign persuasion. While candidates may spend some time on their websites detailing the experiences and credentials they have in order to impress the public, they will spend far more time telling representative stories from their lives in order to persuade people to vote for them. They use these stories as a way to make a narrative argument about who they are as candidates and why they are better than their opponents.
- Storytelling offers persuasive messages that are easier to follow than complex logical argument, so media-age persuaders are often successful by taking advantage of the narrative argument form.

*Borchers, Timothy A. *Persuasion in the Media Age*, 3rd edition. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2013.



eBaby4u Phase I (Ragsdale, PI) is supported by USDA NIFA Grant No. 2012-4610020098-12111382. **eBaby4u Phase II** (Ragsdale, PI) is supported by MSU Special Research Grant. **eBaby4u Phase III** (Ragsdale, PI) is under review. We gratefully acknowledge the eBaby4u Community Advisory Board for their invaluable contributions to this program.



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