

## Supplementary Guide to Project 9: Persuade with Power

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(Note: About 90% of the manual material has been changed in the 2003 edition)

Instructions to the speaker: First read project nine of the Communication & Leadership Manual. Then read this guide to clarify.

**Objective:** To persuade, by appealing to the audience's interests, using emotion and logic. No notes. 5-7 min.

### What are the keys to tackling project nine?

**Keys:** (a) Topic selection. (b) Structure. (c) Emotional and logical appeal.

(a) Topic selection. Analyze the audience first. What topics will they be interested in? For a topic being considered, will the audience be agreeable, apathetic, hostile, or uninformed? Then consider your knowledge and experience. Which topics do you have personal experience in, are familiar with, and believe strongly in? The topic should not have too large a scope to be tackled in 5 to 7 minutes (e.g. Have a healthy lifestyle). Instead, narrow the scope, and choose only one specific message (e.g. Eat more vegetables). Avoid vague messages (e.g. Live to 100).

(b) Structure. State the objective of the speech up front. Make your strongest, and your opposition's weakest, point, last. A few persuasive structures:

(bi) Problem/solution/action. State the problem, then your solution. Explain why your solution is the best. State what you want the audience to do.

(bii) Proposition to proof. State your solution first, then present your proof.

(biii) Comparative advantage. State the problem, outline different possible solutions and their advantages and disadvantages. Then present your solution and explain why the pros outweigh the cons.

(biv) Motivated sequence: Attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, action.

(bi), (bii), (biv) work well with most audiences, except the hostile ones. (biii) works better with hostile audiences.

Focus on the "why", not the "how". Your objective in this speech is to persuade the audience to adopt your proposal, not to teach them how to implement the proposal. Focus on the reasons supporting your proposal. Don't focus on how the audience can implement your proposal.

(c) Emotional and logical appeal. Use the audience's perspective, not yours. Use evidence and reasons to provide logical proof. Answer the question, "What's in it for the listeners?" Arouse emotions. Appeal to self-interest.

### What are the suitable topics? Less suitable topics?

Suitable topics (as reflected by the titles):

Quit smoking

Eat more vegetables

Try skydiving

Have more babies

(note that all suitable topics are specific)

Less suitable topics (as reflected by the titles):

How to quit smoking (an informative speech, not a persuasive one)

What vegetables to eat (an informative speech)

Skydiving in five steps (an informative speech)

The funny things my cute baby has done (an entertaining or informative speech)

Dare to fail (an inspirational speech, not a persuasive one) (note also that the topic is too general to be persuasive)

**Delivery:** Need a powerful opening to establish relevance and capture attention. Use emotive and descriptive language, vocal variety, visual aids, and body language to appeal to emotions. End firmly.

**What not to do:**

Don't use notes.

Don't forget to state the speech objective at the beginning.

Don't forget to call for action in the conclusion.

Don't deliver an informative speech (How to...).

Don't disguise an informative speech, as a persuasive one, by spending most of the speaking time telling people how to do something (e.g. what vegetables are good for you), and then, in the conclusion, calling for people to do it (e.g. Eat more vegetables). Instead, most of the speaking time should be spent on giving reasons why your proposal is better (e.g. eating more vegetables will reduce the risk of heart diseases), and/or why other alternative proposals are not as good (e.g. eating fatty meat exclusively will increase the risk of many diseases).

Don't just use logic to persuade the audience, use emotions too.

Note: This guide is to be used together with your Communication and Leadership Manual, to answer some of most frequently asked questions. It is not meant to be used on its own. The methods suggested are not the only suitable ones. If you have other methods that you are more comfortable with, and that help you meet the project objectives, use them. There is no such thing as the best method. This guide is the author's opinion only, and is not part of the Toastmasters International literature. If you have any suggestions, please call the author, Kan Kin Fung, at 6552-6990.