

Persuasive strategies



In America, image is everything. Companies spend a lot of money in order to create a corporate brand image in the minds of the consumers. This will ensure that there is a familiarity between the consumer and the product. Therefore, it is clear that in the art of persuasion through the mass media, imagery is the foundation stone in essential techniques such as ethos and pathos. In the film, the filmmakers have used the persuasion tools of a much higher level. The filmmakers did not only single out one handsome man to represent the face of Big Tobacco Company, they also made him a man of great drive, passion and character. The film Thank-you for smoking is a masterpiece of the art of persuasion. Throughout the movie, it is clear that the aspect of persuasion is widely used. The intention of both the writer and the director is unquestionably an agenda of trying to convince the audience to conceive the idea.

The movie Thank You for Smoking cuts across certain cultural values, such as dealing with manipulation, dishonesty and deception in an individual private and public lives and as such, it is especially struggling for professional mediators and negotiators. It is evident that the work relies in particular on skills and techniques that make use of words that aim at twisting, shading and shifting peoples' stated meaning and intentions, of re-framing issues as well as of other manipulations that are indispensable so as to allow an individual to see their disputes and adversaries in a different perspective. In light of these, it is clear that the consumers' nature of making an informed purchase decision involves a 'Tree' dilemma, which is ever-present. This issue faces nearly all practicing mediators daily.

In the film, the persuasion techniques are used by Naylor, a tobacco industry lobbyist who talks smoothly. Naylor advocates for his client in an enthusiastically non-smoking world. The film is an insatiable satire that is outstandingly well done. Naylor comes out as an efficient operator, and he is feared by many, turning and twisting words around and playing its audience for fools. Naylor is like a puffed-up tick affixed to our cultures' warm underbelly self-righteous resentment over smoking. In the last few decades, smoking was socially acceptable as well as prevalent, but globally it is now outlawed, legally and at the same time morally reproached. As such, tobacco industry smokers and social activists are despised extensively. Naylor proclaims himself as the mediator of the evildoers, championing for the right of people who take on an activity that scientifically confirmed to be an affront to the health of the public's.

In that connection, Naylor is fascinating. While a considerable number of people may decide to hate him, an equal number marvels at his techniques and skills of negotiation and wants to explore more about that. His skill and technique in turning and twisting issues around, smudging the distinctions between negotiation and argument are masterful. In his technique, Naylor strive to exclude the frontal attack, since he is fully aware that any direct argument that point-blank support smoking will not be welcomed by his audience. Instead, he skillfully fails to deal with the issue and conversely diverts the center of attention to an individuals' libertarian principle concerning the right to make an informed and personal decision to smoke. At the same time, Naylor does not turn away from the real truth; he speaks out the truth with disarming honesty, coming clean that tobacco use is harmful

to public health. Then, so as to ensure that all is well, he suggests that the fact should be incorporated with other issues when individuals make their personal choice in relation to smoking.

The film presents a keen look on the nature of word twisting, message spinning as well as other negotiation and communication strategies used to create confusion rather than clarity. However, with these different ways of persuading, advocating, and selling we come across nearly every day in the infomercial society. When watching the movie, it is mandatory to separate the techniques and strategies of influencing from the ends and intentions which they are set to accomplish. The fact that deceptive and manipulative strategies are brought into play is less disturbing than the understanding whether their intentions are for good or ill. Nonetheless, the message communication leads to the assessment of the threat to determine whether it is a fear or danger control. As such, individuals will evaluate the threat based on its strengths and on whether those individuals are susceptible to it. This creates a perception that will motivate an individual to evaluate the threat in light of the efficacy of the response. These will stimulate the audience to search for more information on how to deal with the problem. In that connection, when the threat is trivial, individuals will negate the threat, and thus, there will be minimal or less response to the danger. In other words, people will tend to ignore any message carrying the threat if the perceived efficacy and perceived threat are low.

On the contrary, individuals will control danger and at the same time adopt the prescribed response when the perceived efficacy and perceived threat are high. This is because individuals believe that their health is at high risk

and they are likely to experience adverse negative consequences. They are scared, and the resulting fear motivates them to protect themselves. As a result, adaptive responses and defense mechanism such as intention, behavior changes, or attitude are adopted. In light of these, Naylor in the film ensures that the threat messages go along with high efficacy messages. In these conditions, it is evident that fear appealing messages as a part of the persuasive techniques are incorporated with caution, making it a free-will message communication.

Almost touchingly, Naylor involves and at the same time discusses his young son in the movie. He counsels the son on how to negotiate genuine issues with his mother. This idea can be twofold. On one side, it is laudable to teach at early stage children all-necessary skills of negotiation. While, on the other side, the idea distresses many when an innocent and young child is taught to be manipulative at an age where he requires a lot of instruction. Ironically, throughout the film, none of the actors are smoking cigarettes. This explains the process of persuasion as two-fold as stipulated in ELMP. Persuasion involves two routes; that is central and peripheral. An individual will first evaluate the communication message by thinking about the consequences desirability and its likelihood of occurrence. It motivates the individual to think exhaustively about the advantages of the health issue that is at stake. In addition, the peripheral route evaluates the likeability of the source of communication. It is a not as much of thought route, since it occurs when ability or motivation is low. As such, the model helps to understand communication efficacy and tailoring in behavior change efforts.

Historically and still, negotiation is weighed with suspicion, and at the same time, it is a tactic utilized by those who lack conviction or evidence, or are downright immoral. However, the film obligates the audience to marry the idea of persuasion in the real world. Naylor uses negotiation not only for the nice folks, but also as a human ritual created out of an undisputed necessity to gain survival in a midst of difficult, ugly as well as habitually unfair circumstances. The liberation principle is enticing and individuals feel like smoking, since they are at freewill to make their informed choices.

Therefore, the technique employed is constructive, and the same is admitted by anthropological evidence that compelling individuals to discriminate between valid and spurious arguments is healthy, and as such, it elevates the intelligence of human beings. In that connection, individuals learn to sense trickery and thus, they tend to become more skillful at protecting themselves, hence the audience can evaluate the consequences of the communication message.

The Big Tobacco company image is represented by Nick Naylor. He depicts an image that engaging in the activity of smoking can be attractive and sophisticated, and in general, it is one smooth moral fiber. The appearance of Naylor creates an impression that the audience sees. This will create a scenario of visual capture, which lays the foundation for motivation with words. As such, it appears that Naylor in the film is using visual stimulus to sway its audience in favor of smoking. It is, therefore, clear that creating an appropriate image is the most successful persuasive technique. Then it comes to the development of character or ethos that resembles the visual image. As evident in the film, Naylor initiates by outright sketching of his

own character in the minds of the audience. As a result, he developed his ethos so as to give the film some degree of credibility. In addition, the perception that he creates of appearing to be convincing is founded on the audience knowledge of his moral flexibility. His ability to twist words in congressional hearings or talks shows ensured that the truth is subtly kept away from the public.

This strategy is aided by the qualities of imagery and persuasion coupled with passion. Naylor agrees to take the challenge and practices what he can perform best. Throughout the entire film, he exhibits his abilities to surmount anyone within the dominion of debate and communication with passion. This is evident because he defends companies with which not everyone is willing or wants to be associated. In other words, he defends the defenseless, hence scoring to his pathos or passion in the art of negotiation.

In conclusion, Naylor's passion, character and imagery sum up his qualities that are necessary to carry out a successful communication campaign. He combines strategies that aim at concealing the truth from the audience but are cautionary in nature. As such, the free will that Naylor creates entices individuals to make a choice that is in favor of tobacco smoking. Consumers are assumed to be rational, and as such, they make informed and satisfactory decisions. The decisions are guided by personal judgment and knowledge. The film brings an indication that individuals are fed with the communication and they are left to make evaluation of the information that is available. In this way, media execute their role in persuading audience to buy their idea on a day-to-day basis. All in all, when ethos is incorporated with pathos together with imagery, the audiences, especially the American

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people, are well attended to and can be easily persuaded. Besides, the film employed the ELM and EPPM frameworks in order to understand the process of persuasion. The film also captures audience feelings; they understand that the mass media is playing with their insecurity and vanity, however it sounds so attractive. As a result, audience feels like smoking as a tribute that should be paid for their right to choose.