

The Power of Persuasion

Save That Dog! A CMNS 220 Case Study

Who Am I?

- ▶ BFA in Creative Writing from UBC
- ▶ Studied journalism at Carleton University
- ▶ M.Ed. From SFU
- ▶ 25-plus years in magazine writing/editing and consulting
- ▶ 11 years teaching at Capilano U.!
- ▶ Co-Chair, School of Communication
- ▶ Bachelor of Communication Studies and Communication Studies Diploma



What Do I Teach?

- ▶ CMNS 498 Communications Practicum
- ▶ CMNS 490 Group Project in Publishing (see *Dusk* magazine)
- ▶ CMNS 360 Strategic Communication
- ▶ CMNS 354 Advanced Tourism Communications
- ▶ CMNS 220 Advanced Business Writing and Editing
- ▶ CMNS 185 Public Speaking

Learning to Communicate

- ▶ We teach both informative and persuasive writing for the workplace
- ▶ Informative: letters, emails, reports, fact sheets
- ▶ Persuasive: proposals
- ▶ Hybrid I & P: media releases, brochures, ad copy, promotional materials

Learning To Communicate Persuasively

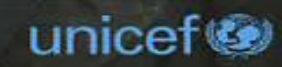
- ▶ For written proposals, we work with a generic format or template, such as the one in Deborah Luchuk's *Successful Business Communication: Bridging the Gap*, Chapter 10
- ▶ But we really emphasize the 3 principles
- ▶ Logos, ethos, pathos



Bad Water Kills More Children Than War



BAD WATER KILLS MORE CHILDREN THAN WAR.
SUPPORT THE "ONE DROP OF WATER" PROJECT. SMS "EDROP" TO 72 900 TO DONATE 50 SEK. WWW.UNICEF.SE



Logic, Emotion, Authority/Credibility

- ▶ What is the logical appeal of donating to UNICEF? Fresh water will save children's lives.
- ▶ What is the emotional appeal? Children need nurturing and protection.
- ▶ What is the appeal to authority? UNICEF is a well-known, credible children's aid organization with a good reputation.

The Challenge: What ARE these appeals?

- ▶ Critical thinking
- ▶ Logical appeals are, well, logical. Making or saving time or money, often.
- ▶ Emotional appeals can be complex (Maslow's Hierarchy; Jib Fowles' 15 appeals)
- ▶ Authoritative appeals are the least familiar to students, but are excellent for teaching academic research skills!

Appeals to Authority

- ▶ You make an argument for something by referring to how someone else did the same thing successfully
- ▶ You make an argument by referring to what experts or researchers have said
- ▶ You provide proof of your own expertise and knowledge

Save That Dog!

- ▶ John Burns, Echo Storytelling Agency
- ▶ Originally developed the scenario as a take-home written assignment
- ▶ Evolved into an in-class exercise
- ▶ 10 different dogs; one survivor
- ▶ Let's PLAY!



The Results?

- ▶ Business majors tended to save Laddie and Dart because of the high monetary value of the dogs
- ▶ Tourism majors tended to save the town's icon, Flame, to protect the town's reputation, or they saved Rocket (high-value police dog)
- ▶ Communications majors often saved Ginger (young dog, huge family)

Evidence of critical thinking?

- ▶ The Business students suggested freezing Laddie's sperm, thus saving him for "future generations"
- ▶ They also suggested that no dog should be saved "for free," and that the final dose should be auctioned off to the highest bidder
- ▶ The Tourism students said their dog was pregnant
- ▶ The Communication students worked out that the single dose left was enough for 1 big dog, or 3 little ones. They opted to save Bella, Chewy and Rusty

And what that led to...

- ▶ Were some really insightful discussions about logos, pathos and ethos
- ▶ In arguing for their dogs, the students applied strong reasoning using each of the three principles of persuasion
- ▶ The instructor's job was to identify which principle was being used each time

Following Up...

- ▶ The scenario appeared again in the CMNS 220 Proposal assignment:
- ▶ See your handout for details
- ▶ Last term, the class saved Rocket!
- ▶ But what to do now, for the grieving pet-owners of Townsville?

Propose a community event, project or initiative...

- ▶ Adopt-a-pup fair
- ▶ Pet cemetery with dedication ceremony
- ▶ Memorial benches in the local park
- ▶ Bark For The Cure fundraiser for canine virus research
- ▶ Smithville Police Dept.'s Gratitude Day (included resurrecting each dog's name)

Thank You!

