



chapter eight

Indirectness in Persuasive Messages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, you will be able to use persuasion effectively, especially when making requests and composing sales messages. To reach this goal, you should be able to

- 1** Describe important strategies for writing any persuasive message.
- 2** Write skillful persuasive requests that begin indirectly, develop convincing reasoning, and close with goodwill and action.
- 3** Discuss ethical concerns regarding sales messages.
- 4** Describe the planning steps for direct mail or email sales messages.
- 5** Compose sales messages that gain attention, persuasively present appeals, and effectively drive for action.

Persuasive messages generally are written in the indirect order. While they do not necessarily involve bad news, their goals often run contrary to the reader’s current wishes. The mind-set of the resistant reader must be changed before they can be successful. Achieving this change requires indirectness.

In the following pages we first provide some general advice for effective persuasion. We then explain how the indirect order is used in two kinds of persuasive messages. One is the persuasive request—for situations in which the reader would likely reject the request without convincing explanation. The other is the sales message. As you will see, this latter type involves a highly specialized form of writing.

GENERAL ADVICE ABOUT PERSUASION

All our previous advice about adapting your messages to your readers comes into play with persuasive messages—only more so. Moving your reader from an uninterested or even antagonistic position to an interested, cooperative one is a major accomplishment. To achieve it, keep the following advice in mind.

Know Your Readers

For any kind of persuasive message, thinking about your subject from your readers’ point of view is critical. To know what kind of appeals will succeed with your readers, you need to know as much as you can about their values, interests, and needs. Companies specializing in direct-mail campaigns spend a great deal of money to acquire this kind of information. Using a variety of research techniques, they gather demographic information (such as age, gender, income, and geographic location) and psychographic information (such as social, political, and personal preferences) on their target audience. They also develop mailing lists based on prior shows of interest from consumers and purchase mailing lists from other organizations that have had success with certain audiences. But even an individual charged with writing an internal or external persuasive message can increase the chances for success by learning as much as possible about the intended readers. He or she can talk with the customer service people about the kinds of calls they’re getting, study the company’s customer database, chat with people around the water cooler or online, and run ideas past colleagues. Good persuasion depends on knowledge as well as on imagination and logic.

Choose and Develop Targeted Reader Benefits

No one is persuaded to do something for no reason. Sometimes their reasons for acting are related to tangible or measurable rewards. For example, they will save money, save time, or acquire some kind of desired object. But often, the rewards that persuade are intangible. People may want to make their work lives easier, gain prestige, or have more freedom. Or perhaps they want to identify with a larger cause, feel that they are helping others, or do the right thing. In your quest for the appeals that will win your readers over, do not underestimate the power of intangible benefits, especially when you can pair them with tangible rewards. Take care, too, not to imply in your messages that your audience is motivated only by money. While the emphasis on financial benefit is warranted in some cases—for example, when trying to win clients for your financial consulting business or get them to open an account with your credit card company—people generally do not like the implication that they are motivated only by money. True, it may be the financial benefit that actually gets them to act, but unduly emphasizing the monetary benefit can backfire if you imply that your readers care about no other goals.

When selecting the reader benefits to feature in your persuasive messages, bear in mind that such benefits can be intrinsic, extrinsic, or something in between. Intrinsic benefits are benefits that readers will get automatically by complying with your request. For example, if you are trying to persuade people to attend your company’s awards dinner, the pleasure of sharing in their colleagues’ successes will be intrinsic to the event. Door prizes would be an extrinsic benefit. We might classify the meal itself

- Persuasive messages are appropriately written in indirect order.

- Following are words of advice for persuasion in general and then for two specific types of messages: persuasive requests and sales.

- Adaptation is especially important in persuasive messages.

- Understanding your readers is critical.

- People can be motivated by tangible or intangible rewards.

- Prefer intrinsic benefits over extrinsic benefits.

- Turn your product features into reader benefits.
- Use scenario painting to help readers visualize themselves enjoying the benefits of the product.

as something of a combination—not really the main feature of the event but definitely central to it. Intrinsic benefits are tightly linked to what you’re asking people to do, while extrinsic ones are added on and more short-lived. Let intrinsic benefits do the main work of your persuasive effort. Focusing too much on extrinsic benefits can actually cheapen your main cause in the readers’ eyes.

When presenting your reader benefits, be sure the readers can see exactly how the benefits will help them. The literature on selling makes a useful distinction between product features and reader benefits. If you say that a wireless service uses a certain kind of technology, you’re describing a feature. If you say that the technology results in fewer missed or dropped calls, you’re describing a benefit. Benefits persuade by enabling readers to envision the features of the recommended product or action in their own worlds.

One common technique for achieving this goal is to use what we call *scenario painting*, or a description that pictures the reader in a sample situation enjoying the promised benefits. Here is an example of scenario painting written by well-known copywriter Morris Massey, promoting a tour to New Orleans:

Saturday morning dawns bright and crisp—perfect for casual browsing through the “treasure” shops of the Quarter—where a world of artists, antiques, and astonishing sights awaits you. From noon, you are escorted through some of the famous areas of the city: the Garden District (where the elegance of the past lives on), the lake area, and the most famous historical sites of the Quarter. Late afternoon finds you approaching famed Commander’s Palace for an exclusive cocktail party and dinner. You’ll practically hear the moan of ol’ river steamers on the mighty Mississippi as you dine.

Scenario painting is very common in sales messages, but you can also use it to good advantage in other persuasive messages, even internal ones. Whatever your persuasive situation or strategy, be sure to provide enough detail for readers to see how they will benefit from what you are asking them to do.

Make Good Use of Three Kinds of Appeals

- Aristotle identified three kinds of persuasive appeals: logic based, emotion based, and character based.

The first acknowledged expert on persuasion, the Greek philosopher Aristotle, lived almost 2,500 years ago, but many of his core concepts are still widely taught and used. Of particular value is his famous categorizing of persuasive appeals into three kinds: those based on logic (logos), those based on emotion (pathos), and those based on the character of the speaker (ethos). All three kinds come into play in every persuasive message—in fact, one might say, in every kind of message. But as the writer of a persuasive message, you will need to think especially carefully about how to manage these appeals and which ones to emphasize given your intended audience.

In practice, these three kinds of appeals often cannot be neatly separated, but to get a sense of your options, you might benefit from thinking about each in turn. What kind of logical appeals might you use—saved money? Saved time? A more dependable or effective product? How about emotional appeals? Higher status? More sex appeal? Increased popularity? And don’t neglect appeals based on character. What kind of image of yourself and your company will resonate with the reader? Should you get a celebrity or expert to endorse your product or to serve as the spokesperson? Not only when planning but also when revising your persuasive message, assess your appeals. Be sure to choose and develop the ones most likely to persuade your audience.

Make It Easy for Your Readers to Comply

- Be sure to make the requested action clear and easy.

Sometimes writers focus so much on creating persuasive appeals that they put insufficient thought into making the requested action as clear and easy to perform as possible. If you want people to give money or buy your product, tell them where and how to do it, and supply a preaddressed mailing envelope or a web address if applicable. If you want employees to give suggestions for improving products or operations, tell them exactly where and how to submit their ideas and make it easy for them to do so. If you want people to remember to work more safely or conserve on supplies, give them

specific techniques for achieving these goals and include auxiliary reminders at the actual locations where they need to remember what to do. Making the desired action specific and easy to perform is a key part of moving your readers from resistance to compliance with your request.

With this general advice in mind, we now turn to the two main types of persuasive messages in business: persuasive requests and sales messages.

PERSUASIVE REQUESTS

INTRODUCTORY SITUATION

Persuasive Requests

Introduce yourself to the next business message situation by returning to your hypothetical position at Pinnacle. As a potential executive, you spend some time working for the community. Pinnacle wants you to do this volunteer work for the sake of good public relations. You want to do it because it is personally rewarding.

Currently, as chair of the fund-raising committee of the city's Junior Achievement program, you head all efforts to get financial support for the program from local businesspeople. You have a group of workers who will call on businesspeople. But personal calls take time, and there are many people to call on.

At its meeting today, the Junior Achievement board of directors discussed the problem of contacting businesspeople. One director suggested using a letter to sell them on giving money. The board accepted the idea with enthusiasm. With just as much enthusiasm, it gave you the assignment of writing the letter (for the president's signature).

As you view the assignment, it is not a routine letter-writing problem. Although the local businesspeople are probably generous, they are not likely to part with money without good reason. In fact, their first reaction to a request for money is likely to be negative. So you will need to overcome their resistance in order to persuade them. Your task is indeed challenging.

There will be many times in your work life when you will need to make persuasive requests. Perhaps, as in the scenario above, you will be asked to write a fund-raising message. Perhaps you will need to ask your management for another staff position or for special equipment. You may need to persuade a potential client to join you in a meeting so that you can demonstrate the benefits of your products. Or maybe you will be trying to persuade your employees to change their behavior in some way.

Whether written to internal or external readers, requests that are likely to be resisted require a slow, deliberate approach. You must persuade the reader that he or she should grant the request before making the request. More specifically, you must present facts and logical reasoning that support your case. And you must do it convincingly. Such a presentation requires that you begin by developing a plan.

Determining the Persuasion

Developing your persuasive plan involves three interrelated tasks: determining what you want, figuring out your readers' likely reactions, and deciding upon a persuasive strategy that will overcome reader objections and evoke a positive response.

Think carefully about your actual goals for your persuasive requests. A request for a one-time-only donation might be written very differently from the kind of request that is intended to create a long-time, multiple donor. If you were convincing employees to leave the parking places next to the building for customers' use, you would write a very different message if you cared about maintaining the employees' goodwill than you would if you simply wanted to order them to comply. Your goals, considered in the context of your organization's goals and your relationship with your readers, are key shapers of your persuasive message.

- Planning your strategy involves three interrelated tasks:
- considering your own goals for the message.

Persuasive requests and sales messages arrive uninvited. They have goals that are likely to encounter reader resistance. Unless they gain the reader's attention at the beginning, they are likely to end up in a trash can.



- considering your readers' needs and interests,
- and deciding upon a persuasive plan.
- A special persuasive plan is the problem-solution strategy, which uses the *common-ground* technique.

As we have said, thinking about your readers' needs and interests is paramount when planning any persuasive message. Considering everything you know about your readers, put yourself in their shoes. Look at the request as they are likely to see it. Figure out what's in it for them, and anticipate their likely objections. From this thinking and imagining, your plan should emerge.

The specific plan you develop will depend on the facts of the case. You may be able to show that your reader stands to gain in time, money, or the like. Or you may be able to show that your reader will benefit in goodwill or prestige. In some cases, you may persuade readers by appealing to their love of beauty, excitement, serenity, or the like. In other cases, you may be able to persuade readers by appealing to the pleasant feeling that comes from doing a good turn. You decide on the benefits that will be most likely to win over your readers.

A special kind of persuasive request is one that casts the request as a problem-solution message. With this strategy, you first present a problem that you and the readers share—a form of the *common-ground* persuasion technique—and then show how doing as you propose will solve the problem for all concerned. Many fundraising letters start with this ploy, giving us striking facts about the current political climate, the environment, or living conditions in a certain area of the world. But this strategy can also be a powerful one for internal audiences who might not be receptive to a straightforward proposal for action but who share your opinion that something needs to be done.

A persuasive request situation is a special opportunity for analysis, creativity, and judgment. With careful use of all three, you can plan messages that will change your readers' minds and move them to action.

Gaining Attention in the Opening

In the indirect messages discussed in Chapter 7, the goal of the opening is to set up the explanation. The same goal exists in persuasion messages. Your beginning should lead to your central strategy. But the opening of a persuasive message has an additional goal: to gain attention.

The need to draw your reader in with the opening of your persuasive message is obvious. You are writing to a person who has not invited your message and probably does not agree with your goal. So you need to get that person into a receptive mood. An interesting beginning is a good step in this direction.

Determine what your reader will find compelling. It might be some statement that arouses curiosity, or it might be a statement offering or implying a reader benefit. Because questions get people thinking, they are often effective openings. The following examples indicate the possibilities.

From the cover letter of a questionnaire seeking the opinions of medical doctors:

What, in your opinion as a medical doctor, is the future of the private practice of medicine?

From a message requesting contributions for orphaned children:

While you and I dined heartily last night, 31 orphans at San Pablo Mission had only dried beans to eat.

From a message seeking the cooperation of business leaders in promoting a fair:

What would your profits be if 300,000 free-spending visitors came to our town during a single week?

If writing your proposal in the form of a problem–solution message, you should start with a goal that you and the readers share. For example, let’s say that a project manager in your company has retired and that, as one of your company’s executive committee, you want a certain member of the office staff to be promoted into the position. The challenge is that no office person in your company has ever broken into the managerial ranks, so any direct proposal to promote your candidate will, you feel sure, be met with this objection. To get readers on your side from the beginning, you could start your message with facts that everyone can agree upon: that someone has retired, that his or her duties are important, that someone capable needs to be found, and fast. Your subject line for an email along these lines might be something like, “Reassigning Jim Martin’s Duties” (which everyone supports), not “Promoting Kathy Pearson” (which your readers will resist unless you have prepared them for the idea).

Whatever the case, the form of indirectness that you choose for your opening should engage your readers right away and get them thinking along the lines that will lead to their approval of your request.

Presenting the Persuasion

Following the opening, you should proceed with your goal of persuading. Your task here is a logical and orderly presentation of the reasoning you have selected.

As with any argument intended to convince, you should do more than merely list points. You should help convey the points with convincing details. Since you are trying to penetrate a neutral or resistant mind, you need to make good use of the you-viewpoint. You need to pay careful attention to the meanings of your words and the clarity of your expression. You need to use logic and emotion appropriately and project an appealing image. And, because your reader may become impatient if you delay your objective, you need to make every word count.

- The opening sets the strategy and gains attention.
- Attention is needed to get the reader in a mood to receive the persuasion.
- What you write to gain attention is limited only by your imagination.

- The opening of a problem-solution message describes a problem that you and your readers share.

- Your persuasion follows.
- Present the points convincingly (selecting words for effect, using you-viewpoint, and the like).

Making the Request Clearly and Positively

- Follow the persuasion with the request.

After you have done your persuading, move to the action you seek. You have prepared the reader for what you want. If you have done that well, the reader should be ready to accept your proposal.
- Word the request for best effect.

As with negative points, your request requires care in word choice. You should avoid words that detract from the request. You also should avoid words that bring to mind images and ideas that might work against you. Words that bring to mind reasons for refusing are especially harmful, as in this example:

I am aware that businesspeople in your position have little free time to give, but will you please consider accepting an assignment to the board of directors of the Children's Fund?
- Do not use a negative tone.

The following positive tie-in with a major point in the persuasion strategy does a much better job:
- Be positive.

Because your organizing skills are so desperately needed, will you please serve on the board of directors of the Children's Fund?
- The request can end the message or be followed by more persuasion.

Whether your request should end your message will depend on the needs of the case. In some cases, you will profit by following the request with words of explanation. This procedure is especially effective when a long persuasion effort is needed. In such cases, you simply cannot present all your reasoning before stating your goal. On the other hand, you may end less involved presentations with the request. Even in this case, however, you may want to follow the request with a reminder of the appeal. As illustrated in the example message (on p. 208), this strategy associates the request with the advantage that saying yes will give the reader.
- Ending with a reminder of the appeal is also good.

Summarizing the General Plan for Requests

- Follow this general plan when writing persuasive requests.

From the preceding discussion, the following general plan for the persuasive request message is apparent:

 - Open with words that (1) set up the strategy and (2) gain attention.
 - Present the strategy (the persuasion) using persuasive language and you-viewpoint.
 - Make the request clearly and without negatives (1) either at the end of the message or (2) followed by words that recall the persuasive appeal.

Contrasting Persuasive Requests

- The following messages illustrate bad and good persuasion efforts.

The persuasive request is illustrated by contrasting letters that ask businesspeople to donate to Junior Achievement. The first message is direct and weak in persuasion; the second is indirect and persuasive. The second message, which follows the approach described above, produced better results.

Obvious Failure in Directness. The weaker letter begins with the request. Because the request is opposed to the reader's wishes, the direct beginning is likely to get a negative reaction. In addition, the comments about how much to give tend to lecture rather than suggest. Some explanation follows, but it is weak and scant. In general, the letter is poorly written. It makes little use of the you-viewpoint. Perhaps its greatest fault is that the persuasion comes too late. The selfish close is a weak reminder of the action requested.

Dear Mr. Williams:

Will you please donate to the local Junior Achievement program? We have set \$50 as a fair minimum for businesses to give. But larger amounts would be appreciated.

The organization badly needs your support. Currently, about 900 young people will not get to participate in Junior Achievement activities unless more money is raised. Junior Achievement is a most worthwhile organization. As a business leader, you should be willing to support it.

If you do not already know about Junior Achievement, let me explain. Junior Achievement is an organization for high school youngsters. They work with local business executives to form small businesses. They operate the businesses. In the process, they learn about our economic system. This is a good thing, and it deserves our help.

Hoping to receive your generous donation,

This weak
letter has no
persuasion
strategy.



Skillful Persuasion in an Indirect Order. The next message shows good imagination. It follows the recommended indirect pattern. Its opening has strong interest appeal and sets up the persuasion strategy. Notice the effective use of the you-viewpoint throughout. Not until the reader has been sold on the merits of the request does the message ask the question. It does this clearly and directly. The final words leave the reader thinking about a major benefit that a yes answer will give.

Dear Mr. Williams:

Right now—right here in our city—620 teenage youngsters are running 37 corporations. The kids run the whole show, their only adult help being advice from some of your business associates who work with them. Last September they applied for charters and elected officers. They created plans for business operations. For example, one group planned to build websites for local businesses. Another elected to conduct a rock concert. Yet another planned to publish newsletters for area corporations. After determining their plans, the kids issued stock—and sold it, too. With the proceeds from stock sales, they began their operations. Now they are operating. This May they will liquidate their companies and account to their stockholders for their profits or losses.

I am sure you will quickly see the merits of the Junior Achievement program. You know the value of such realistic experience to the kids—how it teaches them the operations of business and how it sells them on the merits of the free enterprise system. You can see, also, that it's an exciting and wholesome program, the kind we need more of to combat economic illiteracy. After you have considered these points and others you will find at <http://www.ja.org/>, I know you will see that Junior Achievement is a good thing.

To continue to succeed, Junior Achievement needs all of us behind it. During the 13 years the program has been in our city, it has had enthusiastic support from local business leaders. But with over 900 students on the waiting list, our plans for next year call for expansion. That's why, as a volunteer myself, I ask that you help make the program available to more youngsters by contributing \$50 (it's deductible). Please make your donation now by completing our online contribution form at www.juniorachievement.org. You will be doing a good service for the kids in our community.

Sincerely,

This better
letter uses good
persuasion
strategy.



CASE ILLUSTRATION

Persuasive Request Letter (A Request for Information about Employment Applicants). In this letter a trade publication editor seeks information from an executive for an article on desirable job application procedures. The request involves time and effort for the executive. Thus, persuasion is necessary.



November 20, 2007

Ms. Adelaide O. Romano
Director of Human Resources
Chalmers-DeLouche, Inc.
17117 Proden Road
St. Paul, MN 55108

Dear Ms. Romano:

Question
opening
gets
attention

What clues have you found in employment applications that help you estimate a person's character and desirability to your firm?

Opening
topic
sets up
explanation

Explanation
follows
logically

Young people entering business are eager for any clue that will put them on the other side of the fence. They want to know what goes on in your mind when you are judging the people behind the letters. In our column, "Applications That Talk," we want to send a message especially to those people. To make the article as practical as possible, we are drawing our information from people in the field who really know.

Explanation
is straight-
forward-
appeals
subtly to
good feeling
from helping
others

Request
evolves from
presentation
of appeal

A mutual friend of ours, Max Mullins, told me of your recent problem of finding the most desirable person behind 250 applications. What specific points did you look for in these applications? What clues distinguished some people from the others? When the going got hard, what fine points enabled you to make your final choice? The young people of today are eager for you to answer these questions.

Final
words
recall
basic
appeal

You can help solve their problem if you will jot down your personal comments on these applications and allow me to study them in confidence as the basis for an article. Will you do that for us and them? It is just possible, you know, that through this article to young businesspeople you may contribute to the success of a future leader in your own company. At least, you will be of service to the mass of young people who are trying to get "that" job that is so important to them right now.

Clear and
direct
request

Sincerely,

Charlotte C. Clayton

Charlotte C. Clayton
Associate Editor

enclosures

405 Perrin Ave.
Austin, TX 78716
512-437-7080
FAX: 512-437-7081
Clayton@officea.com

CASE ILLUSTRATION

A Persuasive Internal Request (Using a Central Emotional Appeal Supported by Logical and Character-Based Appeals).* The writer wants employees to participate in the company's annual blood drive. He needs to convince them of the importance of the drive and overcome their likely objections. This message will be distributed to employees' mailboxes.



Department of Community Relations
Mail Location 12
123 Jackson Street
Edison, Colorado 80864
(719) 777-4444
CommunityRelations@Amberly.com

February 27, 2006

Opens with an attention-getting, you-focused question

Did you help save Brad Meyer's life?

Uses a character-based appeal; invites the reader to identify with these "lifesavers"

A few years ago, an employee of Amberly was driving to a friend's wedding when an oncoming car, operated by a drunk driver, swerved across the center line. Brad doesn't remember the crash. But he does remember two months spent in the hospital, two months of surgery and therapy.

Tells an engaging story with specific details

Without the help of people like us, Brad would not have lived. Some Amberly employees save lives regularly. We're blood donors. Please be a lifesaver and join us on Friday, March 19th, for Amberly's annual blood drive.

Your help is needed for a successful drive.

Avoids words such as "draw blood" or "needle" that would bring unpleasant parts of the procedure to mind

Giving blood is simple. The entire process will take less than 45 minutes.

Giving blood is safe. Experienced health professionals from the Steinmetz Blood Center will be on-site to conduct the procedure exactly as they would in a clinic setting.

Giving blood is convenient. The Steinmetz staff will be in Room 401, Building B, between 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. To save time, make an appointment to donate. Call the Steinmetz Blood Center at 569-1170.

Giving blood is important. Nobody knows who will need blood next, but one thing is certain—it will be available only if healthy, caring people take time to give it. Brad's accident required 110 units—more than 12 gallons—of blood. Because 110 people set aside 45 minutes, Brad Meyer has a lifetime of minutes to be grateful.

Addresses likely reader objections

Recalls the emotion-based opening and links it to a logical appeal: you or someone in your family might benefit

Take a few moments now to make your pledge on the reverse side of this letter. Then return it to the Community Relations department, Mail Location 12, by March 15th. For more information about the drive, call the Steinmetz Center at 552-7116.

Makes the requested action clear and easy

From Brad and from other families—like yours and mine—who might need it in the days to come,

Thank you,
John M. Piper
John M. Piper
Director, Community Relations

*Revised and printed with permission from Dr. Joseph A. Steger, President Emeritus, University of Cincinnati.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Words of Wisdom

Organizations have obligations to customers that are not to be taken lightly. Presenting information in a positive light is an acceptable, even desirable, business practice and should be encouraged. However, when companies emphasize the positive aspects of their product to the extent that truth is distorted, and the product is misrepresented, they have acted unethically.

Betsy Stevens, Cornell University

Betsy Stevens, "Persuasion, Probity, and Paltering: The Prudential Crisis," *Journal of Business Communication* 36 (1999): 331.

SALES MESSAGES

INTRODUCTORY SITUATION

Sales Messages

Introduce yourself to the next message type by assuming the role of Anthony A. Killshaw, a successful restaurant consultant. Over the past 28 years, you have acquired an expert knowledge of restaurant operations. You have made a science of virtually every area of restaurant activity: menu design, food control, purchasing, kitchen organization, service. You also have perfected a simple system for data gathering and analysis that quickly gets to the heart of most operations' problems. Testimonials from a number of satisfied clients prove that the system works.

Knowing that your system works is one thing. Getting this knowledge to enough prospective clients is another. So you have decided to publicize your work by writing restaurant managers and telling them about what you have to offer.

At the moment your plan for selling your services is hazy. But you think you will do it by email. It's a fast and easy way to reach your potential customers, you think. They will be more likely to read your message than if you used direct mail. Probably you will use a basic message that will invite the readers to look at your website. The website conveys the details—much more than you could get into the message.

Because sales writing requires special skills, you have decided to use the help of a local advertising agency—one with good experience with this type of selling. However, you have a pretty good idea of what you want, so you will not leave the work entirely up to the agency's personnel. You will tell them what you want included, and you will have the final word on what is acceptable.

- Professionals usually do the sales writing, so why study the subject?
- You need to be able to share your insider knowledge and judgment with sales-writing professionals.

One of the most widely disseminated forms of business communication is the sales message. It is such an important component of most businesses' sales strategies that it has become an elaborate, highly professionalized class, backed by extensive consumer research. Think about the typical sales letter that you receive. Careful attention has been paid to the message on the envelope, to the kinds of pieces inside, and to the visual appeal of those pieces, as well as to the text of the letter itself. Clearly, advertising professionals produce many of these mailings, as well as much of the fundraising literature that we receive. You can also see a professional's hand in many of the sales emails that appear in your in-box. Why, then, you might ask, should you study sales writing?

As a businessperson, you will often find yourself in the position of helping to shape a major sales campaign. You may well have valuable insight into your product's benefits and your potential customers. You need to be familiar with the conventions for sales messages and to be able to offer your own good ideas for their success.

In addition, knowledge of selling techniques can help you in many of your other activities, especially the writing of other kinds of business messages, for in a sense most of them involve selling something—an idea, a line of reasoning, your company, yourself. Sales techniques are more valuable to you than you might think. After you have studied the remainder of this chapter, you should see why.

- Knowing selling techniques helps you in writing other types of messages.

Questioning the Acceptability of Sales Messages

We begin our discussion of sales messages by noting that they are a controversial area of business communication, for two main reasons: they are often unwanted, and they sometimes use ethically dubious persuasive tactics. Probably you know from your own experience that direct-mail sales literature is not always received happily. Called “junk” mail, these mailings often go into the wastebasket without being read. Even so, they must be successful, for the direct-mail business has survived for over a century.

- Direct-mail sales messages are not always well received.

Sales messages sent by email appear to be creating even more hostility among intended customers. Angrily referred to as “spam,” unsolicited email sales messages have generated strong resistance among email users. Perhaps it is because these messages clutter up in-boxes. Maybe the rage results from the fact that mass mailings place a heavy burden on Internet providers, driving up costs to the users. Or perhaps the fact that they invade the reader’s privacy is to blame. There are the downright unethical practices of some email advertisers who use “misleading subject lines and invalid email addresses to thwart filtering attempts and get respondents to open them.”¹ Whatever the explanation, the resistance is real. You will need to consider these objections any time you use this sales medium.

- Email sales messages are even more unpopular, and for good reason.



Fortunately, a more acceptable form of email selling has developed. Called *permission email* or *opt-in email marketing*, it permits potential customers to sign on a company’s website or offer their email addresses to a catalog, phone marketer, or other recipient. The potential customers may be asked to indicate the products, services, and specific topics of their interest. Thus the marketers can tailor their messages to the customer, and the customer receives only what he or she wants. According to a recent white paper by eMarketer, building permission-based email distribution lists is one of the most important steps in waging successful emarketing campaigns.² Such practices can help address the problem of unwanted sales messages.

- Permission email marketing is emerging.



As for the charge that persuasive messages use unfair persuasive tactics, this is, unfortunately, sometimes the case. The unfair tactics could range from deceptive wording and visuals to the omission of important information to the use of emotional elements that impair good judgment. In a Missouri court case, Publishers Clearing House was found guilty of deception for direct mail stating that the recipients were already winners, when in fact they were not.³ To consider a different example, one linen supply company sent a letter to parents of first-year students at a certain university telling them that the students would need to purchase extra-long sheets, offered by this company, to fit the extra-long beds on campus—but omitted the information that only one dorm out of four had such beds. And it is well documented that images, because they work on a visceral level, persuade in ways that tend to bypasses the viewers’ reasoned judgment, leading some to question the ethics of such elements.⁴

- Some persuasive messages use unethical tactics, such as

- deceptive claims,

- omission of important information,

- and heavy reliance on images that trigger a visceral response.

Any persuasive message is, by its very nature, biased. The writer has a favored point of view and wants to persuade the reader to adopt it. Therefore, considering the ethical dimension of your communication, while important for all types of messages, is especially critical for persuasive messages. Let your conscience and your ability to put

- Considering the ethical dimension is, therefore, critical for persuasive messages.

¹ Rich Gray, “Spamitize Your Inbox,” *Guide to E-Mail and More* 8.7 (2000): 66.

² eMarketer, “Effective E-Mail: The Seven Golden Rules You Know (But May Forget to Follow),” 21 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.emarketer.com>>.

³ See Helen Rothschild Ewald and Roberta Vann, “‘You’re a Guaranteed Winner’: Composing ‘You’ in a Consumer Culture,” *Journal of Business Communication* 40 (2003): 98–117.

⁴ Charles A. Hill, “The Psychology of Rhetorical Images,” *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, ed. Charles A. Hill and Marguerite Helmers (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004) 30–38.

yourself in the readers’ shoes guide you as you consider how to represent your subject and win others to your cause.

Preparing to Write a Sales Message

- Begin work on a sales message by studying the product or service to be sold.
- Also, study your readers.
- Research can help you learn about prospective customers. If research is not possible, use your best logic.

Before you can begin writing a sales message, you must know all you can about the product or service you are selling. You simply cannot sell most goods and services unless you know them and can tell the prospects what they need to know. Before prospects buy a product, they may want to know how it is made, how it works, what it will do, and what it will not do. Clearly, a first step in sales writing is careful study of your product or service.

In addition, you should know your readers. In particular, you should know about their needs for the product or service. Anything else you know about them can help: their economic status, age, nationality, education, and culture. The more you know about your readers, the better you will be able to adapt your sales message.

In large businesses, a marketing research department or agency typically gathers information about prospective customers. If you do not have such help, you will need to gather this information on your own. If time does not permit you to do the necessary research, you may have to follow your best logic. For example, the nature of a product can tell you something about its likely buyers. Industrial equipment would probably be bought by people with technical backgrounds. Expensive French perfumes and cosmetics would probably be bought by people in high-income brackets. Burial insurance would appeal to older members of the lower economic strata. If you are purchasing a mailing list, you usually receive basic demographics such as age, sex, race, education, income, and marital status of those on the list. Sometimes you know more—interests, spending range, consumption patterns, and such.

- Next, decide on what appeals and strategies to use, and pick a central selling point.
- Appeals may be emotional (to the feelings),

Determining the Central Appeal

With your product or service and your prospects in mind, you are ready to create the sales message. This involves selecting and presenting your persuasive appeals, whether emotional, logical, character based, or a combination. But for most sales messages, one appeal should stand out as the main one—mentioned in the beginning, recalled in the middle, and reiterated at the end. While other benefits can be brought in as appropriate, the message should emphasize your central, best appeal.

Emotional appeals—those based on our senses and emotions—can be found in almost any sales message, but they predominate in messages for goods and services that do not perform any discernable rational function. Illustrating emotional appeal is the following example from a message that attempts to sell perfume by linking the romance of faraway places with the product’s exotic scent:

Linger in castle corridors on court nights in London. Dance on a Budapest balcony high above the blue Danube. Seek romance and youth and laughter in charming capitals on five continents. And there you’ll find the beguiling perfume that is fragrance *Jamais*.

- or they may be rational (to the reason),
- or they may be based on the projected character of the seller.

Logical appeals are more rational. These include strategies based on saving money, making money, doing a job better, and getting better use from a product. Illustrating a rational appeal (saving money) are these words from a message selling magazine subscriptions:

I am going to slash the regular rate of \$36 a year down to only \$28, saving you a full 22 percent. That means you get 12 information-filled new issues of *Science Digest* for only \$2.33 a copy. You save even more by subscribing for 2 or 3 years.

Appeals based on character persuade by implying such arguments as “I use this product, so you should, too” or “I am an authority, so you should do what I recommend.” Ads that employ sports figures, film stars, or experts to sell their products are relying heavily on character-based appeals. Companies themselves can often take on an appealing “character” in their sales campaigns. Note how the following excerpt

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

The Growing Popularity of White Papers

A kind of sales writing that more and more companies are using is the white paper. Originally, it was used to brief government officials on affairs of state, but it is becoming extremely popular as a more indirect form of selling than the obvious sales pitch.

A business white paper typically opens with a description of a situation, usually some kind of problem that the recipient's company faces or soon will face, or a need that it has. Sometimes this section can go on for several paragraphs or pages without even mentioning the seller's product. At some point, though, the white paper will offer the seller's products or services as a solution to the problem or answer to the need. The document thus often appears to serve an educational purpose, only secondarily selling a product.

For example, a white paper written by a telecommunications company opened with a description of the competitive forces threatening providers of telecommunications services. It then offered the company's product—which integrated voice, video, and data services—as an answer to piecemeal solutions. Most white papers, like this example, are written business to business, informing one's partners in the industry of new technology or other kinds of products that can benefit all concerned.

Many white papers are beautifully formatted and illustrated, as if produced by the staff of a professional magazine. In fact, they are similar in nature to the subtly promotional articles in trade magazines. For guidelines and examples, visit the website of Michael A. Stelzner, author of the WhitePaperSource newsletter, at <www.stelzner.com>.

from a sales letter for *Consumer Reports* magazine uses the company's identity to persuade:

Consumer Reports is on your side. We're a nonprofit consumer protection organization with no commercial interests whatsoever. To put it bluntly, we don't sell out to big companies and private interest groups—we're accountable to no one except to consumers. And when you're not beholden to advertisers (like other so-called consumer protection publications), you can tell it like it is.

People may also buy a certain product because they want to identify with, and be identified with, a certain successful, socially responsible, or "cool" company as projected in the company's sales messages.

In any given case, many appeals are available to you. You should consider those that fit your product or service and those that fit your readers best. Such products as perfume, style merchandise, candy, and fine food lend themselves to emotional appeals. On the other hand, such products as automobile tires, tools, and industrial equipment are best sold through rational appeals. And almost any product could be promoted through a character-based appeal. Often a combination of appeals is your best strategy, but be sure that they work together to create a coherent effect.

How the buyer will use the product may be a major basis for selecting a sales strategy. Cosmetics might well be sold to the final user through emotional appeals. Selling cosmetics to a retailer (who is primarily interested in reselling them) would require rational appeals. A retailer would be interested in their emotional qualities only to the extent that these make customers buy. A retailer's main questions about the product are: Will it sell? What turnover can I expect? How much money will it make for me?

Determining the Makeup of the Mailing

When you write a sales message to be sent by mail, a part of your effort is in determining the make-up of the mailing. To know what you want to say in your main message,

- Select the appeals that fit the product and the prospects.
- The prospects' uses of the product often determine which appeal is best.
- To know what to say in your sales message, you will need to decide what the auxiliary pieces, if any, will be.

- Direct mail can contain many kinds of creative components.

you'll need to decide what kinds of additional pieces will be included and how they will support the main piece.

Consider, for example, a recent mailing by Scotts LawnService (see the case illustration on p. 217). The mailing comes in a 9-inch by 12-inch white envelope with the words "LAWN ANALYSIS ENCLOSED FOR (the recipient's address)" on the front, as well as the words "(recipient's city) RESIDENTS: PLEASE TAKE NOTICE." Both the kind of envelope used and the wording on it convey the image of an official, personalized document.

Inside are three 7½-inch by 10½-inch pages. The top page includes the main sales letter on the front, with bold letters in the top right corner advertising a "**FREE No-Obligation Lawn Analysis for (the resident's address).**" On the back are six testimonials under the heading "**Here's what our customers say about Scotts LawnService.**"

The second page, on glossy paper, has "before" and "after" pictures of a lawn under the heading "**Now you can enjoy a thick, green, beautiful lawn . . . and Scotts Lawn-Service will do the work!**" On the back are various character appeals for the company, under the heading "**Here's why you can expect more from Scotts LawnService than any other lawn service.**"

The third page is a replica of a "FREE LAWN ANALYSIS" form "TO BE COMPLETED FOR (the recipient's) FAMILY at (the recipient's address)," with "SAMPLE" stamped (or appearing to be stamped) across the form.

The last piece is a return envelope with a detachable form to fill out and return. Both parts advertise again the "FREE No-obligation Lawn Analysis."

The author of these documents determined that the free lawn analysis for each individual customer address would be the immediate selling point, with the main reader benefit being the beautiful lawn that the analysis would lead to. With these decisions made, the writer could then decide what to place in the foreground of the letter, what to put into the other pieces, and how to coordinate the letter with the other pieces. Even if someone else, such as a graphic artist or desktop publishing expert, will be designing the pieces of your mailing, you need to plan how all parts of the sales package will work together.

- Sales messages may use innovative salutations, headlines, and other attention-gaining devices.

As the Scotts letter shows, the letter itself can include creative elements, such as the attention-getter in boldface in the upper right corner, the tagline before the salutation ("You'll be seeing our truck on [your street] a lot this year!"), and special use of typography and indentation. Or, to consider another example, one sales letter eliminated the salutation and inside address, using engaging statements in the place of these standard letter components:

IT'S GREAT FOR PENICILLIN.
BUT YOU CAN DO WITHOUT IT
ON YOUR ROOF . . .

We're referring to roof fungus, which, like penicillin, is a moldlike growth. However, the similarity ends there. Unlike penicillin, roof fungus serves . . .

- Email sales messages can use all the creativity that computers allow.

Email sales messages can use all the publishing features available on the computer. The message can be presented creatively with color, font variations, box arrangements, artwork, and such. It may include links to support material as well as to the ordering procedure. And it may have attachments. Just as with a direct-mail package, the email sales package uses many elements to persuade and to make available all the information a reader needs to complete the sale.

Gaining Attention

- The basic requirement of the beginning is to gain attention.

The beginnings of all sales messages have one basic requirement. They must gain attention. If they do not, they fail. The reason is apparent. Because sales messages are sent without invitation, they are not likely to be received favorably. In fact, they even may be unwanted. Unless they gain attention early, the messages will not be read.

With direct mail, the envelope containing the message is the first attention getter. All too often the reader recognizes the mailing as an uninvited sales message and promptly discards it. For this reason many direct-mail writers place an attention getter on the envelope. It may be the offer of a gift (“Free gift inside”). It may present a brief sales message (“12 months of *Time* at 60% off the newsstand price”). It may present a picture and a message (a picture of a cruise ship and “Tahiti and more at 2-for-1 prices”). An official-appearing envelope sometimes is used. So are brief and simple messages such as “Personal,” “Sensitive material enclosed,” and “May we have the courtesy of a reply.” The possibilities are limited only by the imagination.

- With direct mail, attention begins with the envelope.

With email, of course, there is no envelope. The attention begins with the from, to, and subject fields. As one authority explains, you should clearly tell who you are and identify your company.⁵ Many “spam” messages disguise these identities, and you hope your readers will not regard your message as spam. You should also address the reader by name. Though some readers will delete the message even with this clear identification, the honesty conveyed will induce some to read on.

- With email, it begins with the from, to, and subject fields. Be honest.

The subject line in email messages is the main place for getting attention. Here honesty and simplicity should be your guide. The subject line should tell clearly what your message is about, and it should be short. It should avoid sensationalism such as “How to earn \$60,000 the first month.” In addition, avoiding sensationalism involves limiting the use of solid caps, exclamation points, dollar signs, “free” offers, and such. In fact, you risk having spam filters block your message or put it into the junk folder of your readers’ computers if you use “free” or other words and phrases commonly used by spam writers. An email with the subject line “Making your restaurant more profitable” that is sent to a researched list of restaurant managers and owners is much more likely to be opened and read than a message with the subject line “You have to read this!” that is sent to thousands of readers indiscriminately.



- Make the subject line clear and short. Avoid sensationalism.

Holding Attention in the Opening

The first words of your message also have a major need to gain attention. The reader must be moved to read on. What you do here is a part of your creative effort. But the method you use should assist in presenting the sales message. That is, it should help set up your strategy. It should not just gain attention for attention’s sake. Attention is easy to gain if nothing else is needed. In a sales letter, a small explosion set off when the reader opens the envelope would gain attention. So would an electric shock or a miniature stink bomb. But these methods would not be likely to assist in selling your product or service.

- The opening sentence should hold attention and set up the strategy.

One of the most effective attention-gaining techniques is a statement or question that introduces a need that the product will satisfy. For example, a rational-appeal message to a retailer would clearly tap his or her strong needs with these opening words:

- It can use logic,

Here is a proven best-seller—and with a 12 percent greater profit.

Another rational-appeal attention getter is this beginning of an email sales message from eFax.com:

Never type a fax again!

This paragraph of a message selling a fishing vacation at a lake resort illustrates a need-fulfilling beginning of an emotional-appeal approach:

- emotion,

Your line hums as it whirs through the air. Your line splashes and dances across the smooth surface of the clear water as you reel. From the depth you see the silver streak of a striking bass. You feel a sharp tug. The battle is on!

⁵Jim Sterne and Anthony Priore, *Email Marketing: Using Email to Reach Your Target Audience and Build Customer Relationships* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000) 143.

- or character appeal.

As you can see, the paragraph casts an emotional spell, which is what emotional selling should do. A different tack is illustrated by the following example. It attracts interest by telling a story and using character-based appeal:

It was in 1984 that three enterprising women met to do something about the lack of accessible health information for women.

- Gimmicks can gain attention and emphasize a theme in sales messages.

As mentioned previously, gimmicks are sometimes used to gain attention in direct-mail sales. But a gimmick is effective only if it supports the theme of the message. One company made effective use of a penny affixed to the top of a letter with these words:

Most pennies won't buy much today, but this penny can save you untold worry and money—and bring you new peace of mind.

A paper manufacturer fastened small samples of sandpaper, corrugated aluminum, and smooth glossy paper to the top of a letter that began with these words:

You've seen the ads—
 You've heard the talk—
 Now feel for yourself what we mean by level-smooth.

- Summary messages are also effective.

Thus far, the attention-gaining techniques illustrated have been short. But longer ones have been used—and used effectively. In fact, a technique currently popular in direct-mail selling is to place a digest of the sales message at the beginning—usually before the salutation. The strategy is to quickly communicate the full impact of the sales message before the reader loses interest. If any of the points presented arouse interest, the reader is likely to continue reading.

Illustrating this technique is the beginning of a letter selling subscriptions to *Change*. These lines appeared before the salutation, which was followed by four pages of text.

A quick way to determine whether you should read this letter:

If you are involved in or influenced by higher education—and you simply don't have the time to read copiously in order to “keep up”—this letter is important. Because it offers you a money-shortcut (plus a *free gift* and a money-back guarantee).

As a subscriber to *CHANGE*, the leading magazine of higher learning, you'll have facts and feelings at your fingertips—to help *you* form opinions on today's topics: tenure, professors' unions, open admissions, the outlook for new PhDs . . . On just about any subject that concerns academe and you.

CHANGE has the largest readership of any journal among academic people. To find out why 100,000 people now read *CHANGE* every month, take three minutes to read the following letter.

Building a Persuasive Case

With the reader's attention gained, you proceed with the sales strategy that you have developed. In general, you establish a need. Then you present your product or service as fulfilling that need.

- Plans vary for presenting appeals. Emotional appeals usually involve creating an emotional need.

The plan of your sales message will vary with your imagination. But it is likely to follow certain general patterns determined by your choice of appeals. If your main appeal is emotional, for example, your opening has probably established an emotional atmosphere that you will continue to develop. Thus, you will sell your product based on its effects on your reader's senses. You will describe the appearance, texture, aroma, and taste of your product so vividly that your reader will mentally see it, feel it—and want it. In general, you will seek to create an emotional need for your product.

- Rational appeals stress fact and logic.

If you select a rational appeal as your central theme, your sales description is likely to be based on factual material. You should describe your product based on what it can do for your reader rather than how it appeals to the senses. You should write matter-of-factly about such qualities as durability, savings, profits, and ease of operation.

- Character-based appeals create trust in or identification with the seller.

When using character-based appeals, you will emphasize comments from a well-known, carefully selected spokesperson. Or, if the character being promoted is that of

CASE ILLUSTRATION

A Sales Letter Using All Three Appeals (Logical, Emotional, and Character Based). This letter for a lawn care service comes with several other pieces—including “before” and “after” pictures, customer testimonials, and a sample “free lawn analysis” form with the customer’s name and address printed on it.



Scotts
LawnService®
271 2nd Street
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

Announces the immediate benefit that will lead to the main benefit: a beautiful lawn

FREE No-Obligation Lawn Analysis for
14111 Scottslawn Rd-Attn Dan Adams

March 27, 2006

The Adams Family
14111 Scottslawn Rd-Attn Dan Adams
Marysville, OH 43041-0001

Makes it seem as though Scotts may have already looked at the customer's lawn

YOU'LL BE SEEING OUR TRUCK ON SCOTSLAWN RD A LOT THIS YEAR!

Dear Adams Family,

Do you know what's wrong with your lawn?

What do you need to do now to protect your lawn from unsightly weeds, insects you can't even see, and damaging turfgrass diseases? Call Scotts LawnService®! We have developed NEW Ortho Weed-B-Gon Pro® and Ortho® Max™ Pro Insect Control to handle tough weed and insect lawn problems.

Uses the bandwagon appeal—do what so many of your neighbors are doing

Sign up for Scotts LawnService like so many of your neighbors who had those problems. You'll see us treating their lawns throughout the season.

Now you can have a Scotts LawnService professional inspect your lawn for potential problems.

Builds Scotts' ethos as a company of knowledgeable professionals

We'll carefully examine your lawn and give you a detailed report on what we find, and what you need to do to keep your lawn thick, green and healthy.

Uses you-attitude; suggests that you need to call in the experts

And there's absolutely no cost and no obligation for this FREE Lawn Analysis.

Simply call us Toll Free at 1-800-736-0205 within the next 14 days, and Scotts LawnService will arrange for your FREE Lawn Analysis. It's easy, and you don't have to be home. We'll also include our recommendations for a Scotts LawnService program that's right for your lawn, plus a no-obligation price quote.

Makes several logical appeals

Appeals to emotion and logic and builds trust in the Scotts professionals

If you decide to become a Scotts LawnService customer, we'll put together a program that will give you the beautiful lawn you've always wanted. We use Scotts® slow-release, professional fertilizers on your lawn – and you can really see the difference in the results.

We'll evaluate your lawn during every visit, foreseeing and solving problems that may occur and taking personal responsibility for its progress. That's why Scotts LawnService offers you a Satisfaction Guarantee.

Requested action is clear and easy, and linked to the main benefit

Call Scotts LawnService now or mail in the slip enclosed in the postage-paid envelope to request your FREE No-Obligation Lawn Analysis. It's the first step to having a thick, green, healthy lawn you can be proud of.

Sincerely,


Mike Pribanic
North Jersey, Branch Manager

A final reminder of the main benefit and the easy first step

P.S. It's so important to start early - to enjoy a beautiful lawn all season long. Please provide your phone number on the request slip, detach, and mail in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. For faster service, call 1-800-736-0205 to receive your FREE No-Obligation Lawn Analysis.

- Sales writing is stylistically and visually interesting.

the company itself, you will provide evidence that your company is expert and dependable, understands customers like “you,” and stands behind its service or product.

The writing that carries your sales message can be quite different from your normal business writing. Sales writing usually is highly conversational, fast moving, and aggressive. It even uses techniques that are incorrect or inappropriate in other forms of business writing: sentence fragments, one-sentence paragraphs, folksy language, and such. As the case illustrations show, it also uses mechanical emphasis devices (underscore, capitalization, boldface, italics, exclamation marks, color) to a high degree. It can use all kinds of graphics and graphic devices as well as a variety of type sizes and fonts. And its paragraphing often appears choppy. Any sales message is competing with many other messages for the intended reader’s attention. In this environment of information overload, punchy writing and visual effects that enable quick processing of the message’s main points have become the norm in professional sales writing.

Stressing the You-Viewpoint

- The you-viewpoint is important in sales writing.

In no area of business communication is the use of the you-viewpoint more important than in sales writing. A successful sales message bases its sales points on reader interest. You should liberally use and imply the pronoun *you* throughout the sales message as you present your well-chosen reader benefits.

The techniques of you-viewpoint writing in sales messages are best described through illustration. For example, assume you are writing a sales message to a retailer. One point you want to make is that the manufacturer will help sell the product with an advertising campaign. You could write this information in a matter-of-fact way: “HomeHealth products will be advertised in *Self* magazine for the next three issues.” Or you could write it based on what the advertising means to the reader: “Your customers will read about HomeHealth products in the next three issues of *Self* magazine.” Viewing things from the reader’s perspective will strengthen your persuasiveness. The following examples further illustrate the value of presenting facts as reader benefits:

Facts

We make Aristocrat hosiery in three colors.

The Regal weighs only a few ounces.

Lime-Fizz is a lime flavored carbonated beverage.

Baker’s Dozen is packaged in a rectangular box with a bright bull’s-eye design.

You-Viewpoint Statements

You may choose from three lovely shades.

You’ll like Regal’s featherlight touch.

You’ll enjoy the refreshing citrus taste of Lime-Fizz.

Baker’s Dozen’s new rectangular package fits compactly on your shelf, and its bright bull’s-eye design is sure to catch the eyes of your customers.

You may also want to make use of scenario painting, putting the reader in a simulated context that brings out the product’s appeal. The J. Peterman clothing company is famous for this technique, exemplified in the following excerpt from an advertisement for a men’s silk sweater:

Your P-38 has lost a wing in a dogfight somewhere over France.

You eject seconds before it turns into a fireball.

Newton was right, those trees down there are getting close fast.

Hard pull on the ripcord, a loud “whump,” a bone-jarring shock . . . you look up and hallelujah, there it is:

The silk.

Can you think of a single good reason why a man shouldn’t have a sweater made of this same terrific stuff?

Choosing Words Carefully

- Consider the effect of your words.

In persuasive messages, your attention to word choice is extremely important, for it can influence whether the reader acts on your request. Try putting yourself in your reader’s place as you select words for your message. Some words, while closely related in meaning, have clearly different emotional effects. For example, the word *selection* implies a

CASE ILLUSTRATION

An Email Sales Message (Using Rational Appeal). Note how complete coverage is made easier by using short paragraphs, bold text, and underlining.

From: NextStudent <ven@mailsubs.com>
To: marie.flatley@sdsu.edu
Subject: Urgent news regarding your student loans

Subject line identifies the nature of the message while luring the reader to open it immediately

Can't see any images? [Click to view!](#)



Colorful headline draws reader's attention

URGENT NEWS REGARDING YOUR STUDENT LOANS

Quick Links:
[Student Loan Consolidation Application Rates and Terms](#)
[Private Student Loans](#)
www.nextstudent.com

Places important links at the top of email message for easy access

Opens with attention getter that offers reader benefit

Dear Marie Flatley,

Currently, you may be eligible to consolidate your student loans at a fixed rate as low as 2.75% through NextStudent. Consolidation prevents payment increases.

Background details help build interest

However, the U.S. Department of Education has just announced two HUGE changes to the federal student loan consolidation and reconsolidation programs. Starting April 1, the government will require most borrowers to consolidate through their current lender only – even if they can get a better deal elsewhere. In addition, most borrowers will be permitted to consolidate one time only (right now you can consolidate whenever you find a better deal).

If you have already consolidated, you may save thousands of dollars over the life of your loans by reconsolidating with NextStudent before March 29, 2006 and taking advantage of special borrower-incentive interest rate reductions to reduce your rate to as low as 2.75%! By taking action now, the average student can save up to 60% on their payments! Even if you have already consolidated, you can slash your interest rate if you act immediately!

Use of you-viewpoint while providing details creates desire. Bolding emphasizes key ideas

Link here makes action easy to take

If you have not yet consolidated your student loans, it is essential that you do so immediately! Interest rates on federal student loans **will be rising July 1, 2006**. Consolidation is a **free** federal program that can **save you thousands** by locking in the current low rates for the life of your loan.

APPLY ONLINE – It's FAST, easy and FREE.

There will be a mad dash to consolidate and reconsolidate – last year at this time, procrastinators missed out on the lowest rates ever! Reconsolidation or consolidation can be done online in a matter of minutes. These programs are FREE - they cost nothing and can save you thousands of dollars!

CASE ILLUSTRATION

(concluded)

NextStudent's *online application is quick, easy, and secure. If you have any questions about consolidation or reconsolidation, give us a call; our Education Finance Advisors are here to help you.*

Urges immediate action through choice of channel—online or toll-free call

Again, we cannot stress enough the urgency of this news to everyone who holds student loans. *Consolidating or reconsolidating before it is too late will mean thousands of extra dollars in your pocket over the term of your student loans!* Call NextStudent immediately at 800-778-0882 or apply online at www.NextStudent.com

Provides physical address and phone as required by the can spam legislation

Sincerely,

NextStudent Inc.
www.NextStudent.com

(800) 778-0882
11225 N. 28th Drive, Suite A-202
Phoenix, AZ 85029

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Use of a seal often gives reader the assurance needed to respond.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

The Importance of Vividness in Sales Messages

In reviewing the research on visual persuasion, Charles A. Hill identifies *vividness* as a key element in persuasive messages, whether verbal or visual.*

Research has shown that readers are more persuaded by one vivid picture or story than they are by statistics. For example, the picture of a hungry child or a detailed story about the child can persuade more successfully than the statistic that thousands of children are hungry. This finding seems illogical because many cases should logically outweigh one case. But as Hill points out, reactions to vividness are not logic based. They tend to elicit immediate, emotional responses, not reasoned ones, and emotion often persuades more powerfully than reason.

Hill offers the following hierarchy of vividness, with the most vivid information at the top and the least at the bottom:

- Actual experience
- Moving images with sound
- Static photograph
- Realistic painting
- Line drawing
- Narrative, descriptive account
- Abstract, impersonal analysis
- Statistics

Look for ways to include vivid, attractive detail—whether in the form of words or graphics—at key points in your persuasive message.

*Charles A. Hill, "The Psychology of Rhetorical Images," *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, ed. Charles A. Hill and Marguerite Helmers (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004) 25–40.

choice while the word *preference* implies a first choice. Here are some examples where a single adjective changes the effect of a sentence:

- You'll enjoy our hot salsa.
- You'll enjoy our fiery salsa.
- You'll enjoy our spicy salsa.

Framing your requests in the positive is also a proven persuasive technique. Readers will clearly opt for solutions to problems that avoid negatives. Here are some examples:

Original Wording

Tastee ice cream has nine grams of fat per serving.

Our new laser paper keeps the wasted paper from smudged copies to less than 2 percent.

Positive Wording

Tastee ice cream is 95 percent fat free.

Our new laser paper provides smudge-free copies more than 98 percent of the time.

Including All Necessary Information

Of course, the information you present and how you present it are matters for your best judgment. But you must make sure that you present enough information to complete the sale. You should leave none of your readers' questions unanswered. Nor should you fail to overcome any likely objections. You must work to include all such basic information in your message, and you should make it clear and convincing.

As we say, you will also need to decide how to apportion your information across all the pieces in your mailing or the layout of a screen. With direct mail, you should use your letter to do most of the persuading, with any enclosures, attachments, or links

- Give enough information to sell. Answer all questions; overcome all objections.
- Make the letter carry the main sales message. Enclosures should serve as supplements.

As in this Habitat for Humanity example, most sales mailings consist of a letter and a coordinated group of support pieces.



providing supplementary information. These supplements might provide in-depth descriptions, price lists, diagrams, and pictures—in short, all the helpful information that does not fit easily into the letter. You may want to direct your readers’ attention to these other pieces with such comments as “you’ll find comments from your satisfied neighbors in the enclosed brochure,” “as shown on page 7 of the enclosed catalog,” or “you’ll see testimonials of satisfied customers in the blue shaded boxes.”

- In email sales messages, the supporting information can be accessed through links or attachments.

When you send the sales message by email, the supporting information must be worked into the message or presented in links or attachments that you invite the reader to view. You must take care to avoid the appearance of too much length or clutter when working this material into the message. By skillfully cutting up the message visually (see Next Student case illustration, pp. 219–220), you can reduce the effect of excessive length. And by making the boxes attractive with imaginative use of color, font selection, and formatting, you can enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. In either mail or email selling, your goal is to give the readers all they need to know to complete a sale, while allowing them the option of reading only as much as they desire.

Driving for the Sale

- End with a drive for the sale.
- In strong selling efforts, a command is effective. For milder efforts, a request is appropriate. Take the reader through the motions.

After you have caught your reader’s interest in your product or service, the next logical step is to drive for the sale. After all, this is what you have been working for all along. It is a natural conclusion to the sales effort you have made.

How to word your drive for the sale depends on your strategy. If your selling effort is strong, your drive for action also may be strong. It may even be worded as a command. (“Order your copy today—while it’s on your mind.”) If you use a milder selling effort, you could use a direct question (“May we send you your copy today?”). In any event, the drive for action should be specific and clear. In no way should it resemble a hint. For best effect, it should take the reader through the motions of whatever he or she must do. Here are some examples:

“Just check your preferences on the enclosed order form. Then fax it to us today at 888.755.5265!”

“Mail the enclosed card today—and see how right *Fast Company* is for you!”

Similarly, in email selling you will need to make the action easy. Make it a simple click—a click to an order form, to order instructions, or such. Words such as these do the job well: “Just click on the button below to order your customized iPod case now!” and “You can download our free new catalog of business gifts at <<http://thankyoutoo.com>>.”

Urging the Action

Because readers who have been persuaded sometimes put things off, you should urge immediate action. “Do it now” and “Act today” are versions of this technique, although some people dislike the commanding tone of such words. Even so, this type of action is widely used. A milder and generally more acceptable way of urging action is to tie it in with a practical reason for doing it now. Here are some examples:

- . . . to take advantage of this three-day offer.
- . . . so that you can be ready for the Christmas rush.
- . . . so that you will be the first in your community.

- Urge action now.

Recalling the Appeal

Yet another effective technique for the close of a sales message is to use a few words that recall the main appeal. Associating the action with the benefits that the reader will gain by taking it adds strength to your sales effort. Illustrating this technique is a message selling Maxell DVDs to retailers. After building its sales effort, the message asks for action and then follows the action request with these words:

- . . . and start taking your profits from the fast-selling Maxell DVDs.

Another illustration is a message selling a fishing resort vacation that follows its action words with a reminder of the joys described earlier.

- It’s your reservation for a week of battle with the fightingest bass in the Southland.

- Recalling the appeal in the final words is good technique.

Adding a Postscript

Unlike other business messages where a postscript (P.S.) appears to be an afterthought, a sales message can use a postscript as a part of its design. It can be used effectively in a number of ways: to urge the reader to act, to emphasize the major appeal, to invite attention to other enclosures, to suggest that the reader pass along the sales message, and so on. Postscripts effectively used by professionals include the following:

PS: Don’t forget! If ever you think that *Action* is not for you, we’ll give you every cent of your money back. We are that confident that *Action* will become one of your favorite magazines.

PS: Hurry! Save while this special money-saving offer lasts.

PS: Our little magazine makes a distinctive and appreciated gift. Know someone who’s having a birthday soon?

PS: Click now to order and automatically enter our contest for a Motorola Q smartphone.

- Postscripts are acceptable and effective.

Offering Name Removal to Email Readers

Until January 1, 2004, it was a courtesy to offer the recipients of commercial email the option of receiving no further emails from the sender. Now, thanks to the so-called CAN-SPAM Act, it is a legal requirement as well.⁶ Consider placing this invitation in a prominent place—perhaps even before the message text. According to one authority, “This is the equivalent of asking, ‘Is it OK if we come in?’”⁷

- Offer to remove readers from your email list—it’s the law.

Reviewing the General Sales Plan

From the preceding discussion, a general plan for the sales message emerges. This plan is similar to the classic AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action) model developed almost a century ago. It should be noted, however, that in actual practice, sales

- Sales messages vary in practice, but this plan is used most often.

⁶ For further information, visit the Federal Trade Commission’s website at <<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/canspam.htm>>.

⁷ Nick Usborn, as quoted in Sterne and Priore, *Email Marketing*, 151.

messages vary widely. Creativity and imagination are continually leading to innovative techniques. Even so, the general prevailing plan is the following:

- Gain favorable attention.
- Create desire by presenting the appeal, emphasizing supporting facts, and emphasizing reader viewpoint.
- Include all necessary information—using a coordinated sales package (brochures, leaflets, links, appended parts, and such).
- Drive for the sale by urging action now and recalling the main appeal.
- Possibly add a postscript.
- In email writing, offer to remove name from your email list to comply with new legal requirements.

Evaluating Contrasting Examples

The following two email sales messages show bad and good efforts to sell Killshaw’s restaurant consulting services. Clearly, the weak message is the work of an amateur and the better one was written by a professional.

Weakness in an Illogical Plan. Although the subject line of the amateur’s sales message presents the main appeal, it is dull and general. The opening statement is little more than an announcement of what the consultant does. Then, as a continuation of the opening, it offers the services to the reader. Such openings do little to gain attention or build desire. Next comes a routine, I-viewpoint review of the consultant’s services. The explanation of the specific services offered is little better. Although the message tells what the consultant can do, it is dull. The drive for action is more a hint than a request. The closing words do suggest a benefit for the reader, but the effort is too little too late.



The weak email is amateurish. It does little more than announce that services are available.

Subject: A plan to increase profits

Ms. Collins,

You have probably heard in the trade about the services I provide to restaurant management. I am now pleased to be able to offer these services to you.

From 28 years of experience, I have learned the details of restaurant management. I know what food costs should be. I know how to find other cost problems, be they the buying end or the selling end. I know how to design menu offerings for the most profitability. I have studied kitchen operations and organization. And I know how the service must be conducted for best results.

From all this knowledge, I have perfected a simple system for analyzing a restaurant and finding its weaknesses. This I do primarily from guest checks, invoices, and a few other records. As explained on my website (<<http://www.restaurantimp.com>>), my system finds the trouble spots. It shows exactly where to correct all problems.

I can provide you with the benefits of my system for only \$1,500—\$700 now and \$800 when you receive my final report on your operations. If you will fill out and return by email the information requested below, I will show you how to make more money.

Larry Kopel, Consultant

Skillful Presentation of a Rational Appeal. The better message follows the conventional sales pattern described in the preceding pages. Its main appeal is rational, which is justified in this case. Its subject line gains interest with a claim of the main message presented in you-viewpoint language. The beginning sentence continues this appeal with an attention-holding testimonial. The following sentences explain the service quickly—and interestingly. Then, in good you-viewpoint writing, the reader learns what he or she will get from the service. This part is loaded with reader benefits (profits, efficiency, cost cutting). Next, after the selling has been done, the message drives for action. The last sentence ties in the action with its main benefit—making money. A post note about how to “unsubscribe” meets the legal requirements and uses a courteous tone.

Subject: A proven plan that guarantees you more profits

Ms. Collins,

“Killshaw is adding \$15,000 a year to my restaurant’s profits!”

With these words, Bill Summers, owner of Boston’s famed Pirate’s Cove, joined the hundreds of restaurant owners who will point to proof in dollars in assuring you that I have a plan that can add to your profits.

My time-proven plan to help you add to your profits is a product of 28 years of intensive research, study, and consulting work with restaurants all over the nation. I found that where food costs exceed 40 percent, staggering amounts slip through restaurant managers’ fingers. Then I tracked down the causes of these losses. I can find these trouble spots in your business—and I’ll prove this to you in extra income dollars!

To make these extra profits, all you do is send me, for a 30-day period, your guest checks, bills, and a few other items. After analyzing these items using my proven method, I will write you an eye-opening report that will tell you how much money your restaurant should make and how to make it.

From the report, you will learn in detail just what items are causing your higher food costs. And you will learn how to correct them. Even your menu will receive thorough treatment. You will know what “best-sellers” are paying their way—what “poor movers” are eating into your profits. All in all, you’ll get practical suggestions that will show you how to cut costs, build volume, and pocket a net 10 to 20 percent of sales.

For a more detailed explanation of this service, review the information presented at my website (<<http://www.restaurantimp.com/>>). Then let me prove to you, as I have to so many others, that I can add money to your income this year. This added profit can be yours for the modest investment of \$1,500 (\$700 now and the other \$800 when our profit plan report is submitted). Just email the information requested below and I’ll do the rest.

That extra \$25,000 or more will make you glad you did!

Larry Kopel, Consultant

You were sent this message because of your status in the restaurant field. If you wish to be removed from our list, please send an email with the word “unsubscribe” in the subject line.

Following the conventional plan, the better email uses good strategy and technique.



TECHNOLOGY IN BRIEF

Visuals Help Business Writers Add Interest to Sales Messages

Sales messages—both print and rich email—often include art and animation to increase the visual appeal as well as attract attention to the message. In one recent experiment comparing two types of visual email messages, an HTML and a video message, Holland America found that the video message resulted in a 33 percent higher click-through rate than the HTML mailing. Furthermore, once readers got to the site, the average stay was nine minutes compared to five minutes for the HTML message. Additionally, the video message was cost effective, costing only 20 percent more than the HTML message.*



- <http://webclipart.about.com/>
- <http://www.fotosearch.com/>
- <http://www.flashfoundry.com/en/>
- <http://www.freeaudioclips.com/>

Today's business writers need not be artists or professional photographers to use good visuals in their documents. Major software programs include bundled art, animation, photographs, and sounds; and scanners and easy-to-use programs are readily available to help writers create customized visuals. Additionally, on the web, writers can find a vast assortment of specialists with products and services to help enhance their sales messages.

Here is a short list of a few websites. You'll find more on the textbook website as well.

A rich collection of links to websites for clip art, tutorials, hardware, and software.

A meta search tool for finding professional photographs, illustrations, and videos.

A subscription website for finished and modifiable Flash files.

A site for free audio clips and links to software tools as well as a good search tool.

*Heidi Anderson, "Cruising to E-Mail Results," 10 July 2003 <http://www.clickz.com/em_mkt/case_studies/prnt.php/2232781>.

SUMMARY BY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1 Describe important strategies for writing any persuasive message.

1. Certain advice applies to all persuasive messages:

- Know your readers—well.
- Choose and develop targeted reader benefits.
 - Both tangible and intangible benefits can be persuasive.
 - Prefer intrinsic to extrinsic benefits.
 - Express product features as reader benefits.
 - Use scenario painting to help your readers experience the product's appeal.
- Make good use of three kinds of appeals.
 - Emotional appeals play on our senses (taste, hearing, and so on) and our feelings (love, anger, and the like).
 - Rational appeals appeal to logic (with a focus on thrift, durability, efficiency, and such).
 - Character-based appeals use an appealing spokesperson or an attractive image of the company to help sell the product.
- Make it easy for your readers to comply.

2 Write skillful persuasive requests that begin indirectly, use convincing reasoning, and close with goodwill and action.

2. Requests that are likely to be resisted require an indirect, persuasive approach.

- Such an approach involves developing a strategy—a plan for persuading.
- Your opening words should set up this strategy and gain attention.
- Follow with convincing persuasion.

- Then make the request—clearly yet positively.
 - The request can end the message, or more persuasion can follow (whichever you think is appropriate).
3. Sales messages are a controversial area of business communication.
- Many sales messages are unwanted.
 - “Junk” mail clutters people’s mailboxes.
 - “Spam” clutters their in-boxes.
 - Some sales messages use unethical tactics.
 - They may make deceptive claims.
 - They may omit important information.
 - They may rely heavily on visuals that trigger a visceral response.
 - Use your conscience and your ability to put yourself in the readers’ shoes to create ethical persuasive messages.
4. A sales message requires special planning.
- Learn all you can about your service or product and your intended readers.
 - Then select an appropriate central appeal and supporting appeals.
 - Determine the makeup of the mailing.
 - Decide what you will include in the letter and what you will put in auxiliary pieces.
 - Consider a creative approach to the letter format itself.
 - Email sales messages can also have auxiliary pieces and innovative format.
5. Although innovations are frequently used, the basic sales message generally follows this traditional plan:
- The opening seeks to gain attention and set up the sales presentation.
 - The body makes your persuasive case.
 - It develops the appeals you have chosen.
 - It uses punchy writing and techniques for visual emphasis (typography, white space, color, and other visual elements).
 - In emotional selling, the words establish an emotional atmosphere and build an emotional need for the product or service.
 - Character-based appeals build trust and invite identification with the company.
 - In rational selling, the appeal is to the thinking mind, using facts and logical reasoning.
 - Throughout the message, emphasis is on good sales language and the you-viewpoint.
 - All the information necessary for a sale (prices, terms, choices, and the like) is included in the message, though references are made to supporting information.
 - Next comes a drive for a sale.
 - It may be a strong drive, even a command, if a strong sales effort is used.
 - It may be a direct question if a milder effort is desired.
 - In either case, the action words are specific and clear, frequently urging action *now*.
 - Taking the action may be associated with the benefits to be gained.
 - Postscripts often are included to convey a final sales message.
 - In email messages, opt-out links are often provided as a professional courtesy, and to comply with new laws.

3 Discuss ethical concerns regarding sales messages.

4 Describe the planning steps for direct mail or email sales messages.

5 Compose sales messages that gain attention, persuasively present appeals, and effectively drive for action.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain why a persuasive request is usually written in the indirect order. Could the direct order ever be used for such messages? Discuss.
- 2 What is the role of the you-viewpoint in persuasive requests?
- 3 Compare persuasive requests and sales messages. What traits do they share? How are they different?
- 4 Consider ads that you have seen on television. Which ones rely heavily on emotional appeals? Which on logical appeals? Which on character-based appeals? Do the chosen appeals seem appropriate given the product, service, or cause that is being promoted?
- 5 Think of a television, radio, print, email, or Internet sales message or persuasive request that you regard as especially effective. Explain why you think it was well designed.
- 6 What appeals would be appropriate for the following products when they are being sold to consumers?
 - a. Shaving cream.
 - b. Carpenter's tools.
 - c. Fresh vegetables.
 - d. Software.
 - e. Lubricating oil.
 - f. Women's dresses.
 - g. Perfume.
 - h. Fancy candy.
 - i. CD players.
 - j. Hand soap.
- 7 When could you justify addressing sales letters to "occupant"? When to each reader by name?
- 8 Rarely should a sales letter exceed a page in length. Discuss this statement.
- 9 Should the traditional sales-message organization discussed in the text ever be altered? Discuss.
- 10 Discuss the relationship between the sales message and its accompanying support information in an example you've seen. What was the purpose of each piece?
- 11 When do you think a strong drive for action is appropriate in a sales message? When do you think a weak drive is appropriate?
- 12 Think of a sample persuasive request or sales message that you regard as ethically questionable. Discuss the nature of the ethical problems.

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES

- 1 Assume that, as a volunteer for a nonprofit organization in your town, you have been asked to write the next fundraising letter for the organization. In what ways might you gather enough information about the intended readers to write a successful message?
- 2 List the tangible and intangible benefits that you might describe when promoting the following items or services:
 - a. Membership in a health club
 - b. High-speed Internet service or digital cable service
 - c. A certain line of clothing
- 3 List some extrinsic benefits you might use as an extra push if you were promoting the items in number 2.
- 4 For each item in number 2, list two likely product features and then turn them into reader benefits.
- 5 Choose one of the items in number 2 and write a paragraph that uses scenario painting to promote the item.
- 6 Criticize the persuasive request message below. It was written by the membership chairperson of a chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), a service organization consisting of retired executives who donate their managerial talents to small businesses

in the area. The recipients of the message are recently retired executives.

Dear Ms. Petersen:

As membership chair it is my privilege to invite you to join the Bay City chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives. We need you, and you need us.

We are a volunteer, not-for-profit organization. We are retired business executives who give free advice and assistance to struggling small businesses. There is a great demand for our services in Bay City, which is why we are conducting this special membership drive. As I said before, we need you. The work is hard and the hours can be long, but it is satisfying.

Please find enclosed a self-addressed envelope and a membership card. Fill out the card and return it to me in the envelope. We meet the first Monday of every month (8:30 at the Chamber of Commerce office). This is the fun part—strictly social. A lot of nice people belong.

I'll see you there Monday!

Sincerely yours,

- 7 Evaluate the following sales message. It was written to people on a mailing list of fishing enthusiasts. The

writer, a professional game fisher, is selling his book by direct mail. The nature of the book is evident from the letter.

Have you ever thought
why the pros catch fish
and you can't?

They have secrets. I am a pro, and I know these secrets. I have written them and published them in my book, *The Bible of Fishing*.

This 240-page book sells for only \$29.95, including shipping costs, and it is worth every penny of the price. It tells where to fish in all kinds of weather and how the seasons affect fishing. It tells about which lures to use under every condition. I describe how to improve casting and how to set the hook and reel them in. There is even a chapter on night fishing.

I have personally fished just about every lake and stream in this area for over forty years and I tell the secrets of each. I have one chapter on how to find fish without expensive fish-finding equipment. In the book I also explain how to determine how deep to fish and how water temperature affects where the fish are. I also have a chapter on selecting the contents of your tackle box.

The book also has an extensive appendix. Included in it is a description of all the game fish in the area—with color photographs. Also in the appendix is a glossary that covers the most common lures, rods, reels, and other fishing equipment.

The book lives up to its name. It is a bible for fishing. You must have it! Fill out the enclosed card and send it to me in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope. Include your check for \$29.95 (no cash or credit cards, please). Do it today!
Sincerely yours,

- 8** Criticize each of the following parts of sales messages. The product or service being sold and the part identification are indicated in the headings.

Email Subject Lines

- Earn BIG profits NOW!!!
- Reduce expenses with an experienced consultant's help.
- Free trial offer ends this week!

Openings

Product or Service: A Color Fax Machine

- Now you can fax in color!
- Here is a full-color fax that will revolutionize the industry.
- If you are a manufacturer, ad agency, architect, designer, engineer, or anyone who works with color images, the Statz Color Fax can improve the way you do business.

Product or Service: A Financial Consulting Service

- Would you hire yourself to manage your portfolio?
- Are you satisfied with the income your portfolio earned last year?
- Dimmitt-Hawes Financial Services has helped its clients make money for over a half century.

Parts of Sales Presentations

Product or Service: A Paging Service

- Span-Comm Messaging is the only paging service that provides service coast to coast.
- Span-Comm Messaging is the only paging service that gives you the freedom to go coast to coast and still receive text messages.
- Span-Comm Messaging gives you coast-to-coast service.

Product or Service: A Color Fax Machine

- The Statz Color Fax is extraordinary. It produces copies that are indistinguishable from the originals.
- The extraordinary Statz Color Fax produces copies identical to the originals.
- Every image the Statz Color Fax produces is so extraordinary you may not be able to tell a fax from an original.

Product or Service: Vermont Smoked Hams

- You won't find a better-tasting ham than the old-fashioned Corncob Smoked Ham we make up here on the farm in Vermont.
- Our Corncob Smoked Ham is tender and delicious.
- You'll love this smoky-delicious Corncob Smoked Ham.

Product or Service: A Unique Mattress

- Control Comfort's unique air support system lets you control the feel and firmness of your bed simply by pushing a button.
- The button control adjusts the feel and firmness of Control Comfort's air support system.
- Just by pushing a button you can get your choice of feel and firmness in Control Comfort's air support system.

Action Endings

Product or Service: An Innovative Writing Instrument

- To receive your personal Airflo pen, you have but to sign the enclosed card and return it to us.
- You can experience the writing satisfaction of this remarkable writing instrument by just filling out and returning the enclosed card.
- Don't put it off! Now, while it's on your mind, sign and return the enclosed card.

Product or Service: A News Magazine

- d. To begin receiving your copies of *Today's World*, simply fill out and return the enclosed card.
- e. For your convenience, a subscription card is enclosed. It is your ticket to receiving *Today's World*.
- f. If you agree that *Today's World* is the best of the news magazines, just sign and return the enclosed card.

Postscripts

- a. You can also monogram items you order before November 1.
- b. If you order before November 1, you can monogram your items.
- c. Items ordered before November 1 can be monogrammed.

CRITICAL THINKING PROBLEMS

Persuasive Requests

1 As manager of the Little City Chamber of Commerce, your current assignment is to sell the area's business leaders on the need to construct a Teen Recreation Center. This would be a place where the local teenagers could go on weekends and evenings to have good and safe recreation.

The need for the project should be apparent to all Little City residents. Particularly on weekends, the teenagers "cruise" the city's main thoroughfare for hours. Traffic becomes so snarled that a "stop-and-go" pace is normal for miles. Teenagers yell to one another and even hang out of their cars to visit with those in other cars. Traffic control by the local police has been ineffective. The problem has become so severe that emergency vehicles have had serious problems getting to their destinations.

It has become apparent to you and a few of the city leaders that a solution is needed. A place for the teenagers to meet and socialize appears to be the answer. But the project will need money, and this is where you come in. The Chamber of Commerce will spearhead the effort to raise the funds needed from local businesses. And you have been assigned the task of writing the message that will explain the problem and solution so clearly and persuasively that the money will come in.

You and your small group of business leaders have located a vacant building in the warehouse district, although it is in need of repair. The owner, Jim Falkenstein, has agreed to donate the structure if the funds for renovating it can be raised. Fortunately, the building has an abundance of parking space around it, and its size is adequate. Anna Frisch, a Chamber member and local architect, estimates that \$92,000 would do the initial renovation work. The center would need \$60,000 annually for operating expenses. Thus your appeal will be for up-front money to get the project going and a pledge for continuing support to keep the project going. Your persuasive request will be in letter form and will include a return card that will suggest initial donations in \$100 increments—\$100, \$200, \$300, \$400, \$500, and "other." The card will also include an annual support pledge section in the same increments.

Now use your best imagination and thinking to construct the persuasive message that will show how this center will benefit Little City's citizenry and businesses—and, of course, bring in the money.

2 Assume that you are the placement and career planning director at your university. One of your many tasks is publishing the annual report of the current year's employment of graduating seniors. The report consists of beginning salary data for each degree with highs, lows, averages, and total number of job offers made through your office.

Unfortunately, over the past few years you have noticed that the number of students reporting their beginning salaries to you is slipping. Most probably, the new graduates are so enthusiastic that they forget to fill out the salary information sheet you include with all applications for graduation packets. You have asked professors to announce the need for returning the forms to you in their classes, and you placed such a request in the student newspaper. But your efforts have been in vain. Presently your records indicate that about

60 percent of the graduating students get initial job contacts through your office, but only 36 percent report their salary data to you.

You believe that the report you publish yearly is useful on a number of counts. First, it can help you assess the marketability of the university's products—its graduates. Second, it can be useful in determining which majors are in most demand. Third, the report can serve as a career-counseling guide for students just beginning their academic programs. But the quality of the report depends on having complete and current data from the students.

Thus, you decide to write a persuasive message to this year's spring graduates requesting that they return the salary information sheet to you. The information will remain anonymous and will be compiled into summary

statistics by major field of study. However, you depend on each student to provide accurate and complete information.

What will motivate the students to comply with your request? Pride in their university? Providing help for other

students? General cooperativeness? Perhaps there are other possibilities. Select the appeal(s) that is (are) most appropriate, and write the message.

3 For this assignment you are human resources manager for Toby's, a manufacturer of medium-priced women's dresses, skirts, and blouses. You are going to have to persuade your labor force to follow safety rules more closely in their production work.

Over the past year, you have noticed that on-the-job injuries have increased—particularly ones involving the stitching assemblers. It appears that the assemblers have had numerous claims for emergency room treatment for injuries to their fingers and hands from the sewing machines. From one view, these injuries are increasing your insurance cost (you pay for the coverage under the garment workers' union contract). From another, lost days by experienced workers mean less productivity for you. Thus, you decide to investigate the situation further.

Your informal investigation reveals the primary source of the problem. The union contract that you negotiate every three years stipulates that management take every precaution for worker safety. Federal law specifies that sewing machine needle guards (to prevent fingers from getting too close to stitching needles) must be installed on all machines.

While the machines are safer this way, the workers cannot produce as many assembled garments. According to the time and motion studies conducted by your industrial engineers, output with the safety guards is restricted by about 15 percent. Thus, the workers remove the guards to make more money based on the piece-rate incentive program you use for compensation. The risk they take for more money is the chance of increased accidents.

You have alerted your supervisors to the problem. But the informal norms of making more money at any risk have overridden the supervisors' formal efforts to keep the safety guards in place. Thus, you have decided to write a message to the entire union labor force at your company persuading them to follow the safety rules. In the long run, it will be better for everyone involved. For you, as a representative of the company, it will follow the union contract, increase safety, and lower insurance costs.

Think through the situation from the reader's view and construct a persuasive reasoning approach to precede your request. Then write the message.

4 A year ago you, the training director of Shehan-Welch Industries, got management approval to offer an extensive training program for employees. The program consisted of a variety of course offerings. For those whose basic knowledge of mathematics, English, and science is weak, courses were offered after work hours in the company training center. Qualified public school teachers were brought in to teach these courses. For those desiring college course work, Shehan-Welch offered to pay all costs for one course a semester at the local university. And for those merely wanting to study interesting and exciting topics, Shehan-Welch offered a variety of short courses at its training center. To date these have included ceramics, music appreciation, video editing, and interior decorating. Clearly, the plan had something for everyone.

In spite of your best efforts to promote the program, however, few have taken advantage of it. As you see it, the program has been a miserable failure.

Before writing off the program, you will make one last effort to increase participation. Up to this point, bulletin-board announcements and publicity on the company portal have been the primary means of promoting the courses. Now you will use a persuasive message sent to each worker. Those with computer accessibility will receive your message as email. Those without computer accessibility will get the message by mail. You will write the message.

In your message, you will present your most persuasive arguments for taking advantage of the educational opportunities being offered. You will enclose a brochure describing the courses scheduled for the coming months and giving the details of the program.

If you need additional facts, you may supply them as long as they are consistent with the information given.

5 Assume that you are a member of your student government. From time to time the organization has tried to get faculty members to deposit their old examinations in the library so that all students could have access to them before tests. In general, these efforts have met with little success.

Looking over the messages used in the past to persuade faculty members to cooperate, you conclude that they just might be an explanation of the failure. The messages are poorly written—blunt, tactless, and without convincing argument. Obviously they were not written by people who

had taken the communication course in which you now are enrolled.

After you point out some of the obvious shortcomings of these messages to other members of the student government, they call your hand. “If you think you can do better,” they

tell you, “you are welcome to it!” You know that you can, so you accept the challenge. Think out the most effective appeal you can, then write the message that will be sent to all faculty members. You’ll send the message by email.

6 To hear Dallas Williams say it, Micah Wong is the best consultant there is. She connected with Micah through the local chapter of SCORE, Service Corp of Retired Executives. She credits him with much of the early success of her local importing business specializing in high-quality Indian rugs.

While she got the idea for the business and made the connection for the product with an Indian student while in college majoring in business, much of her time the first two years was consumed with just running the business on a day-to-day basis. However, after reading a story in the local paper about SCORE, she decided to check out their website (<www.score.org>) to see if tax help was available for businesses like hers.

She learned not only that SCORE offers free workshops and personalized counseling locally, but also that it has 389 chapters nationally. Its website alone is a rich resource for small businesses getting off the ground, offering templates for business planning, financial guides, and marketing workbooks. It even has an online quiz to help users determine if they have entrepreneurial potential. In fact, SCORE is funded by a \$5 million dollar grant from Congress, but most of the consultants are retired executives who want to share

their business know-how. It was at a tax workshop that Dallas Williams learned about Micah.

So far Dallas’s business had been profitable even though she was competing in a highly competitive niche market; her competitive advantage was that she had the best product. But with Micah’s help, she learned how to manage her inventory better and promote the store more effectively. Both Micah’s extensive retail background and his exceptional ability to read financial statements and interpret them in terms of what needed to be done helped increase sales and profits. Dallas’s enthusiasm for both Micah and SCORE is so contagious, you are convinced he’s the one to contact with your new idea for [you supply an idea for a retail store].

However, Micah’s time is in high demand. He already schedules appointments five days a week and is always booked a couple of months ahead. But Dallas suggested you might be able to talk with him by scheduling a lunch meeting. Since you know that he often works out of the downtown office of the Small Business Administration (SBA), you want to persuade him to join you for lunch somewhere near the SBA office. Your message should get him interested in your idea as well as convince him to accept your invitation for lunch sometime next week.

7 You have been friends with Ashley Gonzales ever since you worked with her on team projects in college. When she graduated, she moved to Galveston, Texas, where she has held various jobs in the hospitality management field. So she has both had broad experience and begun to establish a good network of people in the industry.

You, on the other hand, have been growing a business you started in San Diego to train workers for various types of hospitality jobs. In fact, in the last five years, you have grown from serving 5 to 12 cities in the Southwest. And you’re about ready to break into the Hawaii market, a potentially lucrative one. So you recruited Ashley to open up the market, beginning in Honolulu.

You cannot be happier having both a friend and a talented worker join you. In fact, you have tremendously enjoyed the emails and phone conversations you have been having with her in the preliminary planning of the expansion. As a result of your exchanges, Ashley has a long list of things to do in addition to organizing her own relocation to Hawaii.

However, this morning one more task occurred to you—getting a local phone number for the business in Hawaii. You are a believer in the value of vanity numbers. You would like one that is memorable, easily recognizable, and convenient. It should be personalized for your company. A good number would also assist in marketing, helping to increase sales and expand referrals. Finally, it would be a facilitator in creating an image for your company.

While it’s yet another task for Ashley, it’s clearly one with a lot of value. So you’ll need to persuade her to add it to her list and to make it a high priority.

You might want to remind her that there is a web-based tool she can use to try out various combinations. She will find it on the Verizon website, <<http://www22.verizon.com/Vanity/>>. Be sure to ask her to run her choices by you before she takes off for Hawaii this Friday; you would like to have the weekend to think them through. Send this message as soon as you can.

8 You recently read in *BusinessWeek* of a company that is helping the environment and its employees at the same time.

Hyperion Solutions of Sunnyvale, California, is offering its 2,500 employees \$5,000 toward the purchase of a “green”

car, a car that gets over 45 miles per gallon. What a great idea! You wish your company would do that, too.

So when the announcement went up on your company's portal today calling for suggestions for improving company morale and motivation, you thought this would be a good idea to propose. But because of the expense, you know you need to be persuasive. You believe it is a win-win-win idea: a win for the environment, the employees, and the company. Your message has to show how it is good for company

morale and motivation. Use some specific examples to illustrate how it might be used as a reward or an incentive for meeting goals at your company. It could also be used to help reduce turnover as well as building company loyalty. While its cost is high, it can be expensed. And it definitely makes company values clear.

Write a persuasive message to Mike McLaughlin, CEO of your company, suggesting your company adopt this practice.

9 You work in a research center on your campus that has partnered with one of your center's sponsors in a clothing drive. It is for the nonprofit Dress for Success program that helps women enter the workplace and stay there. One aspect of its work is providing business clothing for low-income women. These women need the suits when they go to interview for jobs, and they get a week's worth of working clothes when they are hired.

While the organization relies on cash donations, volunteers, and in-kind donations, one of your center's sponsors has asked you to help them collect in-kind donations of business clothing. They need new or nearly new suits (pants or skirts), blouses, shoes, and accessories. All items should be

clean and stylish, and they should be turned in on hangers or in boxes. Let them know when and where locally they can drop off their donations. You'll get the most current information from the Dress for Success website at <<http://www.dressforsuccess.org>>. Additionally, you'll tell them where to find a donation bin on your campus. Volunteers will be on hand at all collection sites this week to accept their donations and give receipts for them.

Your job is to write a persuasive message to send to all campus faculty and staff soliciting their donations of clothing that is appropriate to wear to work. Use your creativity and an appeal that will generate lots of donations. You can give them an alternative of making a cash donation.

10 You work in the Investor Relations department of Wise Real Estate Funds, Inc., a real-estate-based mutual fund that many financial advisors and brokerage houses offer for inclusion in investment portfolios.

Periodically, the firm sends informational/promotional mailings to your clients, updating them on facts about the firm (for example, how many clients it has, how its assets are diversified, and what new property it has acquired). An accountant for the firm recently calculated that it spends approximately \$6 per investor on client mailings—not counting such confidential mailings as quarterly statements, tax information, and confirmations of transactions. If your firm could send your general communications out by email, it would save a lot of money, which would increase the money available to invest in property and thus, in all likelihood, the return on investment for your clients.

Your boss, the director of investor relations, wants you to draft a letter from the president for the next informational mailing that will persuade clients to sign up for email delivery

of these mailings. Sure, the firm could simply announce that information would be sent electronically from now on, but some clients would not approve, and others would not take the trouble to read the material if it meant reading it on-screen. So you will try to persuade people to choose email delivery by going to a special screen on your website or by calling your company. You'll reassure them that all materials including personal information will still be sent by mail.

Everyone involved agrees that getting people to take the trouble to perform this action will require special motivating. So the company has decided to add an extrinsic benefit to the appeal—namely, that for each investor who signs up for email delivery, Wise will have a tree planted in the Gulf Coast areas that have been hit by hurricanes. Your company will partner with American Forests, a conservation group based in Washington, D.C., to plant the trees.

The letter will be on the front page of the next newsletter-type mailing. Give the letter your best shot, and consider using visual elements to enhance its appeal.

11 You are the recently hired marketing director for Webwaves Conferencing, a small teleconferencing firm, and you've just gotten great news: You have received a request for a proposal (RFP) from a giant corporation, General Machines, to bid on providing its teleconferencing services. You have worked for this RFP for three months, ever since coming on board with Webwaves. You repeatedly met with, emailed, and called their operations people, describing the

advantages of your technology and services. Lo and behold, you succeeded. You have now been asked, along with the biggest players in the web-conferencing industry, to submit a bid for becoming General Machines' web-conferencing provider. This contract, if you win it, will mean over \$1.3 million a year for your company for the next three years. Your company has never before had an opportunity to bid on this large a contract.

But reality sinks in: Now you have to prepare the proposal. And you cannot do it alone. You can write the overall narrative for the proposal and be responsible for putting it together, but you need the subject matter experts in the other departments to give you the specific pieces. You are going to need the help of your colleagues in the technology architecture department to match up your products' features with General Machines' needs and technological capabilities. You are going to need the accounting department to price the products for General Machines and work up the proposed budget. You will need the sales and training department to develop a plan for training the General Machines employees on the new services. And the legal department will need to work out the terms and conditions for the proposed contract between Webwaves and General Machines.

In other words, you're going to need a lot of good help, fast, from a lot of busy people. And they are not used to putting their own work aside for a collaborative project like this. Before you came, your company essentially had no marketing department. But as the teleconferencing industry began to take off, the company executives realized that they needed to hire someone to get them a bigger piece of the action. You were this someone. And now, your first major opportunity to achieve the goal you were hired for has arrived. To turn

this opportunity into a contract, you're going to have to have the help of people who hardly know you, who do not work under you, who have plenty of other work to do, and who probably have heard very little, if anything, about the work you've been doing. In other words, you're going to have to persuade them to cooperate.

Write an email addressed to all the heads of the relevant departments to share the good news and persuade them to give you what you need. You would like each department head to designate a person who will be in charge of that department's piece and to let you know who this person is. You will also describe the collaborative process for the participants: the department representatives will meet with you early next week for further direction from you; they'll send their pieces to you within two weeks after that; you'll put the proposal together, send it out to all the collaborators for review, and then meet again to discuss any necessary revisions; you'll revise the proposal and send it out for one last review by the parties involved; and then you'll submit the proposal one month from today—the deadline for the RFP. To avoid the appearance of strong-arming people into cooperation, you will not copy the CEO on this email. But you plan to announce your news at next week's executive staff meeting and to invite the CEO to the second meeting of the collaborators.

12 You are the assistant manager of Randolph's Grocery, a midsized grocery store in an eclectic urban neighborhood. Your store offers all the important staples, a fairly wide variety of brands, and some specialty items requested by your clientele (such as international packaged foods, vegetarian entrees, organic produce, and fresh sushi). But it doesn't offer as many different kinds of items or brands as the superstore that just opened about a mile from your store. Nor does it offer a pharmacy, flower shop, and bakery, as the superstore does. And, when you factor in the discounts that the superstore offers on its house brand and special purchases, it probably saves customers about 10 percent on what a cart of groceries at your store would cost. There's no doubt about it: The new store is a major threat to the livelihood of your store.

Fortunately, price and size aren't everything when it comes to determining people's shopping preferences. You've spoken to a lot of your regular customers about their views

on the new store, and while they agree that the other store has advantages, they praise three things in particular about your store: They can easily find what they want, they like the specialty items and the management's willingness to respond to customers' requests, and—most importantly—they like the way your people treat them.

To try to keep this critical competitive edge, you have decided to write a message to all the employees of the store persuading them to go out of their way to deliver exceptional customer service. You will include this message with their paychecks at the end of the week. And, since you have primary responsibility for personnel issues and have a closer relationship with the employees than the manager does, you will sign it yourself. Let the employees know what the situation is and what you'd like them to do to help keep your store—which has been serving this neighborhood since 1923—in business. Put some careful thought into both your appeals and your requests for action.

13 Assume that your business communication class has been asked by a nonprofit organization in your area to help with its mission by writing a fundraising letter. As your instructor directs, either individuals or the class as a whole should pick an existing nonprofit, and the class can write the letter either as an assignment only or for actual use by the organization. Find out all you can about the organization from its website (if there is one), its current materials, interviews, and news articles. And find out about its different supporters and audiences. Who usually gives, and why?

Is there a group that doesn't usually give but that might be persuaded to do so in response to the right kind of letter? Work hard to develop a clear sense of your intended audience. Note that all three kinds of appeals—logic, emotion, and character—are likely to be important. And don't forget the power of specific details and stories. Make your letter look official by using the organization's logo, if possible. Your instructor may also ask you to design additional pieces for this mailing.

14 Since your graduation five years ago, you've been working for a medium-sized company in your area [you choose which one]. You love your work and have learned a great deal about your company's business and industry in five years. But somehow, you don't wake up each day looking forward to your day. And when you read an article in *BusinessWeek* about several companies offering a variety of sabbatical plans to their employees, you begin to think that some of the plans would interest you.

In researching it further, you find that companies as varied as Nike, Pfizer, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Cisco, and Patagonia offer sabbaticals. But you also learned that only 2 percent of U.S. companies offer them, most stating they would not be able to replace the worker. But you think there are benefits that might outweigh some of the drawbacks as well as a variety of plans and lengths.

Sales

15 You are now the director of the Chamber of Commerce of _____ (a city of your instructor's choice with good convention facilities). Next week the site selection committee of the State Teachers Association will meet to determine where their group will meet in August two years from now. You will try to sell them on meeting in your city.

You would like to make a personal presentation, but your request to do so was denied. "The meeting will be behind closed doors," the committee chair told you. "Just send us the information." So you will have to sell the committee members by mail. Your plan is to gather all the facts that convention planners need (hotel capacities, meeting rooms, rates,

Not only do employees get to relieve pent-up frustrations through travel, sports, or spas, but they usually return refreshed, recharged, and more productive. Some report that they are more creative, their sabbaticals contributing to their growth and new perspectives. Others, like the Cisco employees who set up wireless networks in Southeast Asia to aid the tsunami disaster relief, provided favorable publicity for their companies.

Use these benefits and others to help persuade your employer to provide sabbaticals for employees. You might suggest that the program could start small with five-week paid sabbaticals for employees who have worked at least five years, or perhaps short sabbaticals for those volunteering their skills in nonprofits that the company supports.

transportation service, and such). Then you will mold it into a well-organized sales presentation. You may assume that your message will be accompanied by a collection of brochures that the Chamber typically hands out for publicity purposes, but your message will be the primary selling piece.

As you plan the mailing, keep in mind that the members will do more than just attend meetings. Some will bring spouses and children. Most will want to dine at good restaurants. And some will want to take in the scenic, historic, and recreational places in the area. You will send the message to all members of the organization's site selection committee. You have their names and addresses.

16 As a freelance copywriter you must now write a sales message for the Memory Preservation Studio, specialists in children's photographs. Jan Chambers, the owner, wants to offer new parents a contract whereby the studio agrees to take 8- by 10-inch color pictures of their babies at one month, six months, one year, two years, and three years of age for a total of \$120. At each session the parents will have four proofs from which to make their selection. The studio will keep a file and notify parents of the dates when each picture should be taken. The contract requires a payment of \$60 up front and \$15 at each of the four following sessions.

You may assume that your sales message will be accompanied by a brochure showing in miniature three sequences of photographs of the type that will be taken. There will also be a contract form to be signed and returned, with payment, of course. Or if they prefer, new parents can call the studio and sign the contract and pay at the first session. Your mailing list will be constructed from referrals and birth announcements in the local newspaper. Now think through the situation, select the appeal (or appeals) that will make new parents want to preserve memories of their new babies, and write the message.

17 Play the role of the new advertising manager for Davenport's Department Store. Each year before Mother's Day (or Valentine's Day, if your instructor prefers), your predecessor wrote a sales message to all the store's charge customers. The objective of the message was to get the recipients to do their shopping for this special day at Davenport's. You have decided to carry on this practice.

As you review the messages written in past years, you conclude that they were not very persuasive. They are

unimaginative, dull, and flat. You can do better. And you will. So you begin the task by thinking through the situation. What appeals can you use? What can you say that will make the readers want to buy for this holiday—and to buy at Davenport's? Can you suggest certain products? You will try to answer many more such questions before you begin writing. But the end result will be a well-designed and effective sales message.

18 Select from a current magazine or newspaper an advertisement of a product that could be sold profitably by direct mail to business executives. Preferably select an advertisement that presents a thorough description of the product. Then write a sales message for this product. As you write it, be careful not to borrow the wording in the advertisement. In other words, make your message's wording original from

start to finish. Also, assume that you are including a descriptive brochure and an order card in the mailing. The messages will be individually processed and made to appear as if written to the one reader. Address the one to be submitted for class purposes to the first executive on your list, Abby Lee Abbot, Director of Human Resources, Global Insurance Company. (You supply the remainder of the address.)

19 You are finally making your dream come true. You and two friends have recently opened an arts and crafts store in the small city where you live (you can decide the geographical location). It's in a one-story building with about 3,500 square feet of floor space, divided up into 11 small, attractively decorated rooms that help focus customers' attention on the displayed works.

The works themselves come from artists all across your geographical region, and you sell them on commission. The artists rent display space from you, whether a bookshelf (the smallest unit available), a wall (the largest), or something in between. They then provide you with the works they want to sell, tell you what to charge for each, and get paid 80 percent of the selling price. You make money on the rent and the 20 percent commission. Everybody wins, and the arts and crafts industry in your region gets a boost. In fact, with its unique and eclectic wares, your store is getting quite a bit of notice in the local and regional press, as well as considerable word-of-mouth promotion. Customers can find many kinds of interesting handmade items here that they cannot find in galleries or in other stores.

Though things have started well, you need to keep building the business, and an important part of achieving this goal

is to attract more artists and more kinds of art. Over the last several years you have been compiling a list of artists' names and addresses that you've gathered from talking to people at craft fairs and art shows, from taking notes on items sold by other stores, from talking to your current group of artists, and from reading magazines and newsletters in the trade. It's time to write these potential clients to sell them on selling their works through you.

There is just one problem: your store is in a less-than-ideal location. It is far from the downtown area, on the outskirts of town. Worse yet, it is in a building next to the recycling center for your city—which is clean but industrial looking. It is because of the location, in fact, that you were able to rent the space cheaply and get your dream business off the ground. Of course, it is also because your rent is cheap that you're able to keep the rent cheap for the artists.

Using your analytical skills and creativity—as well as any helpful facts about arts and crafts in a particular region—write a message that will appeal to your readers and have them calling you for further details. (At your instructor's discretion, you may substitute another type of goods for the arts and crafts.)

20 Write an email message promoting your services as a(n) _____ consultant (you pick the type). Assume that your company—which can consist solely of yourself, if you like—has compiled a distribution list of recipients who would be likely to be interested in your services, and that your message will be targeted toward these people.

In planning your sales message, figure out what it is exactly that you have to offer, who the recipients are (other businesses of some kind? individuals with certain needs and interests?), how your expertise can benefit them, and what you want them to do. Decide, also, how you will handle the cost issue. (Will you include the cost in this message or deliver it another way? If in this message, what will the cost be,

and how can you present it as positively as possible?) You can get ideas for your business from websites, textbooks, promotional material you've received, your acquaintances and classmates, or any other useful source.

Remember that an email message can take many forms and contain many kinds of attachments. Use your creativity and logic to design the message that will get a favorable response from your readers. Keep in mind that character appeals, designed to build your readers' confidence in you and your services, will be important in this kind of message. And don't forget to put careful thought into the subject line—the feature of your message that will determine whether or not your recipients will even see your hard work.

21 You are chair of the Residence Hall Association's fund-raising committee for your college or university. The association, made up of students who serve as residence hall advisors, needs money to buy special items that the residence hall fees don't cover. For example, you have used such money in the past to buy soccer balls and other light sports equipment,

to liven up the drab walls of the dorms' common areas with movie posters, and to deliver little treats to the residents on certain special days. The fund-raising committee's latest idea is to sell final exam care packages, to be delivered to the students during exam week. Your task is to write the students' parents or guardians to persuade them to buy the packages.

The packages will cost \$20 each. Parents/guardians can choose from two packages. One has Teddy Grahams, peanut butter crackers, cookies, cereal, a bag of chips, hot chocolate mix, popcorn, trail mix, a granola bar, candy, ramen noodles, goldfish-shaped crackers, and gum. The other (healthier) package has low-fat Ritz Bits, Teddy Grahams, low-fat chocolate chip cookies, a granola bar, low-sugar cereal, lite popcorn, reduced-fat Pringles, a Special K bar, a fruit snack, tea bags, goldfish-shaped crackers, dry roasted peanuts, and sugarless gum.

On the order form, which you will design, people need to indicate which package they want; supply the student's name, dorm name, and room number; and add any brief message that they'd like to have delivered with the package. They need to return the form along with a check, made out to the name of your school, to you at your school mailing address within three weeks. You will include a phone number and email address in case they have any questions. They will have to supply their own return envelopes and stamps.

22 You work as the office manager for one of the most popular places in town, a local veterinary clinic. It is popular because the owners and their pets always get the best treatment from the vet, Dr. Marina Munson, and her staff. Not only are they extremely competent in handling and taking care of a variety of pets, but they also have great empathy with their owners.

One area both owners and the veterinary group agree on is that pets should get the best care whenever possible. However, sometimes the tests and treatments are available but the costs are prohibitive. This not only puts the clinic in a bad light; it also makes the owners feel terribly guilty for not being able to give their pets the best medical care available. One solution to this problem is pet insurance.

Dr. Munson realizes that just like people, pets with good medical care are living longer and more subject to age-

related diseases. While most insurance policies do not cover routine office visits for checkups and shots, they do cover over 50 percent of the cost of major procedures. She wants you to create a message she can send to all the cat and dog owners with pets over five years old that the clinic serves. Your message should persuade them to purchase pet insurance for their pets.

While Dr. Munson has no financial interest in any of the pet insurance providers, she believes three have good track records: Veterinary Pet Insurance Superior, PetCare Pals QuickCare Gold, and Petshealth Care Plan's Basic Care. The plans offer a variety of benefits and a range of deductibles, so most owners should be able to find one that would fit their circumstances. All have websites for further explanations and contact information. Your job is to persuade the readers to enroll their pet in a plan of their choice.

23 Your company, Sustained Fitness, Inc., believes its new products are a logical extension of today's fitness videos distributed on DVDs. These three- to five-minute video clips take the form of a personal trainer sent to the customer's cell phone on demand or on your preselected schedule. The complete set of video programs helps users integrate exercise into their daily schedule in small chunks that are customized to the needs of the user.

By integrating exercise into daily activities in short spurts during the day, users will become fit quickly and without big changes in their daily routines and be able to maintain

their fitness. Additionally, you have a website where users can keep track of their progress and a virtual fitness center (an online blog) where users can exchange ideas about fitness, food, and other products. The virtual fitness center also offers a free regularly updated newsletter with information for using seasonal produce.

You want to create a message that will draw customers to your website to sign up for a program. Your prices start at \$49 for a basic 12-week program and extend to \$120 for yearly subscriptions.

24 You were just elected to the position of promotions chair for your campus ambassador program. The campus ambassadors represent the university in a variety of ways, including going to community events, talking to high school students about your school, and giving tours to campus visitors. Your job is to build the school spirit of new incoming students between the time they are accepted and when they arrive on campus.

Since you were not given a big promotional budget line, you have decided to try to do this efficiently using technology and the help of a small focus group. With the group's help

you have designed a website with some download "goodies" such as the school logo for their cell phones, a school fight song ringtone, computer wallpaper featuring campus photos, animated screensavers with newcomer info tidbits, and some mobile video-like games relating to campus sports and other activities. You might even want to include downloadable coupons from the stores and businesses in the campus area as well as anything else that might build their goodwill and school spirit.

Write a message to draw these future students to the website and prompt them to download the goodies they want.