

## The Dynamics of Persuasion

### Chapter 1: Introduction to Persuasion

#### Persuasion

- Is just about anything that involves molding or shaping attitudes
- Can be positive or negative
- Is the study of attitudes and how to change them
- Definition: A symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice

#### 5 components:

- Persuasion is a symbolic process
- Persuasion involves a conscious attempt to influence
- People persuade themselves
- Persuasion involves the transmission of a message
- Persuasion requires free choice

#### Foundations of Persuasion

- Persuasion involves the persuader's awareness he or she is trying to influence someone else
- Requires that the "persuadee" make a conscious or unconscious decision to change his mind about something
- Animals and infants do not persuade because they are not consciously aware they are persuading
- Persuasion has moral components: choose to engage in morally beneficent or morally reprehensible actions

#### Coercion

- Delivers a threat of some consequence
- Attempts to induce the individual to act contrary to her preferences
- Deprives the individual of some measure of freedom or autonomy

#### Persuasive Communication Effects

- Shaping
- Reinforcing
- Changing responses

## Historical Overview

- Rhetoric (the art of public persuasion)
- Sophists, teachers of rhetoric, Greek word *sophos* for knowledge
- Plato
- Aristotle
  - Ethos (the nature of the communicator)
  - Pathos (emotional state of the audience)
  - Logos (message arguments)

## Contemporary persuasion different from the past

- The number of persuasive communications has grown exponentially
- Persuasive messages travel faster than ever before
- Persuasion has become institutionalized
- Persuasive communication has become more subtle and devious
- Persuasive communication is more complex and impersonal

## Persuasion and Ethics

- Persuasion can be used for good or bad purposes, with ethical and unethical intentions