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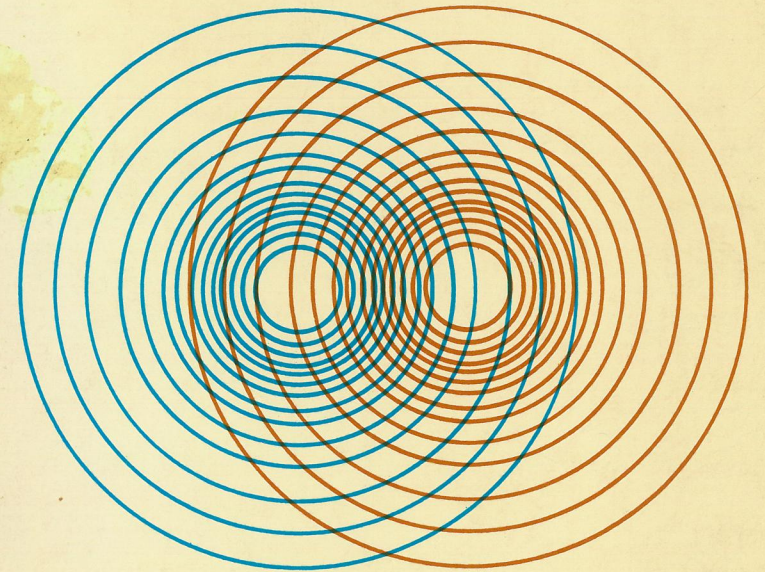
Monroe and Ehninger

Principles of Speech Communication

6th Brief Edition

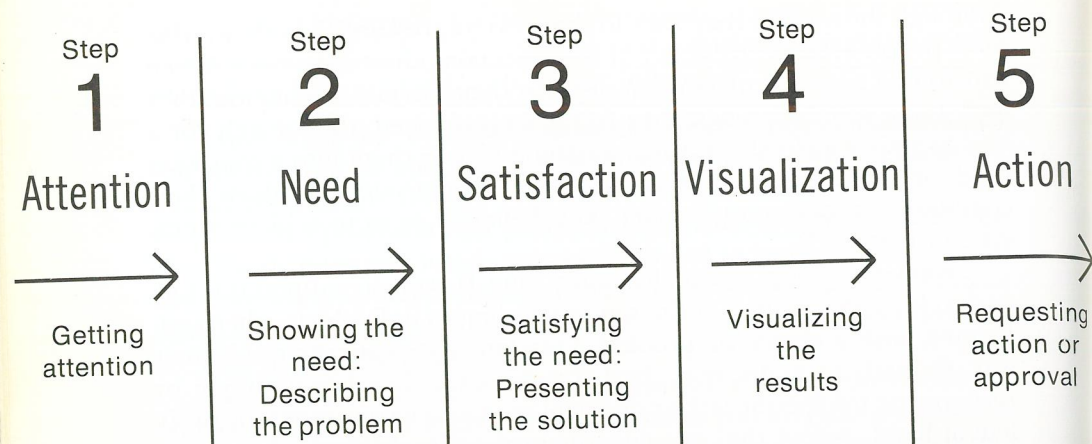
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The Motivated Sequence



Because these questions are so prevalent, they provide a dependable psychological basis upon which a speaker can organize a persuasive talk. Begin by catching the attention of the listeners; direct that attention to a question to be answered or a problem to be solved; next, advance the answer or solution which you believe to be best; then visualize the advantages to be gained from believing or behaving as you recommend; and, finally, ask the audience for agreement or action. By adhering to this general progression from question to answer or from problem to solution, and then on to visualization and action, you can develop your appeals along the thought line that most people are accustomed to following. Such organization will make your speech easier to understand and will render it more naturally persuasive.

A five-step sequence for motivating an audience

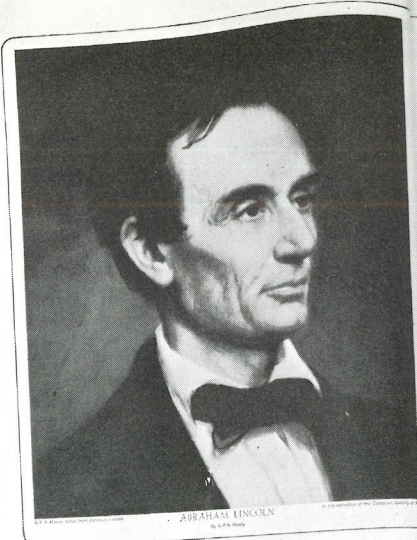
The plan of speech organization which is derived from this analysis of the thinking process may be called *the motivated sequence*: the sequence of ideas which, because it adheres to the steps people naturally follow when systematically thinking their way through problems, *motivates* the audience to accept the speaker's proposition.

As we have already suggested, the motivated sequence consists of five steps:

1. Getting attention. (Attention Step)
2. Showing the need: Describing the problem. (Need Step)
3. Satisfying the need: Presenting the solution. (Satisfaction Step)
4. Visualizing the results. (Visualization Step)
5. Requesting action or approval. (Action Step)

Observe how these steps were employed for a persuasive purpose in an advertisement, "Motivated Men Made America Great," which appeared in *Fortune Magazine*. Here, in part, is the text:

1. [Attention] The beginnings of Abraham Lincoln's greatness can be found in his boyhood desire to learn. . . . With less than a year of formal education, "Honest Abe" overcame the obscurity of a bleak frontier environment to become a self-taught lawyer, a universally respected national leader, and our country's "Great Emancipator"



Motivated Men Made America Great

Abraham Lincoln

The beginnings of Abraham Lincoln's greatness grew as he continued to gain the knowledge he sought. It was fully achieved when the war and competence, leadership reunited a nation that had been divided by sectionalism and thus torn by history's bloodiest civil war.

Lincoln became the sixteenth President of the United States by dedicating himself to service and, being chosen as an Illinois Legislator and the House of Representatives, he distinguished himself as a common man. Kindness, patience, humor and understanding were his characteristics that dominated his personal life and his public career.

With less than a year of formal education, "Honest Abe" overcame the obscurity of a blank frontier environment to become a self-taught lawyer, a universally respected national leader, and our country's "Great Emancipator." He was motivated by an unshakable belief in the rights of others and equality for all. In pursuing his beliefs, Lincoln re-established the principles of justice and democracy that make America great.

Countries need motivated men. Companies do, too, especially when their success depends on the extra effort of individual salesmen and entire sales organizations. We help fill this need for companies in all industries.

Maritz is the only company in the United States equipped exclusively in the business of motivating men to sell. As specialists, we offer complete sales motivation services including planning, program preparation, administration and follow-through. All are offered in conjunction with distinctive merchandise and glamorous travel awards. The combination causes salesmen to work harder, more intelligently, and more successfully. Their increased productivity improves sales and profits for the clients we serve.

Your Maritz Account Executive can tell you how we can help you develop new markets, open new territories, promote particular products, and achieve more sales with a sales motivation program designed to meet your company's specific needs. We suggest you contact him. He offers you the exclusive services of the leader in the field of sales motivation.

Motivating men to sell your product is our business

MARITZ inc.

100 EAST 42ND ST. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

MEMBER OF THE MARITZ GROUP

2. [Need] Countries need motivated men. Companies do, too, especially when their success depends on the extra effort of individual salesmen and entire sales organizations.

3. [Satisfaction] We help fill this need for companies in all industries. *Maritz is the only company in the United States engaged exclusively in the business of motivating men to sell.* As specialists, we offer complete sales-motivation services including planning, program promotion, administration, and *follow-through*. All are offered in conjunction with distinctive merchandise and glamorous travel awards.

4. [Visualization] The combination causes salesmen to work harder, more intelligently, and more successfully. Their increased productivity improves sales and profits for the clients we serve.

5. [Action] Your Maritz Account Executive can tell you how we can help you develop new markets, open new territories, promote particular products, and achieve more sales with a sales-motivation program designed to meet your company's specific needs. We suggest that you contact him. He offers you the exclusive services of the leader in the field of sales motivation.¹⁰

¹⁰From "Motivated Men Made America Great," *Fortune Magazine* (January 1966), 5. Used by special permission of Maritz, Inc.

Observe also how the foreign correspondent Leland Stowe used the motivated sequence in making an appeal for the relief of hungry children overseas:

[*Attention*] I pray that I'll never have to do it again. Can there be anything worse than to put only a peanut between a child and death? I hope you'll never have to do it, and live with the memory of it afterward. If you had heard their voices and seen their eyes, on that January day in the bomb-scarred workers' district of Athens . . . Yet all I had left was a half-pound can of peanuts. As I struggled to open it, dozens of ragged kids held me in a vise of frantically clawing bodies. Scores of mothers, with babes in their arms, pushed and fought to get within arm's reach. They held their babies out toward me. Tiny hands of skin and bone stretched convulsively. I tried to make every peanut count. In their frenzy they nearly swept me off my feet. Nothing but hundreds of hands; begging hands, clutching hands, despairing hands; all of them pitifully little hands. One salted peanut here, and one peanut there. Six peanuts knocked from my fingers, and a savage scramble of emaciated bodies at my feet. Another peanut here, and another peanut there. Hundreds of hands, reaching and pleading; hundreds of eyes with the light of hope flickering out. I stood there helpless, an empty blue can in my hands. . . . Yes, I hope it will never happen to you.

[*Need*] Who would say that a child's life is worth less than a movie a week, or a lipstick or a few packs of cigarettes? Yet, in today's world, there are at least 230,000,000 children who must depend upon the aid of private agencies and individuals. From Amiens to Athens, from Cairo to Calcutta and Chungking, millions upon millions of waifs of war still hold death barely at arm's length. Their only hope rests in the private relief agencies which, in turn, depend entirely upon you and me—upon how much we care and what we give.

[*Satisfaction*] A world-wide campaign exists as a demonstration that the peoples of the United Nations do care. Our own branch of UNAC is American Overseas Aid—United Nations Appeal for Children, with headquarters at 39 Broadway, New York City. In February, American Overseas Aid makes its appeal to raise \$60,000,000 from Americans. That's something to put peanuts forever in their place. Something big enough for every American to want to be in on. Every penny contributed to American Overseas Aid will help bring food, medical care, and new life to millions of child war victims.

[*Visualization*] If we could hear their voices and see their eyes, count-

less millions of children, now hungry and diseased or soon to die, would run and play and laugh once more. It only depends on how many of us hear and how many see. Look at their reaching, outspread fingers—and

[Action] send your contribution to American Overseas Aid, 39 Broadway, New York.¹¹

All five steps in the motivated sequence need not be of equal length; nor, for that matter, need they always stand in the same relative proportion. *Each situation is unique and will demand adaptations.* At times, one or more of the steps may even be left out entirely because the previous knowledge or the attitude of the listeners renders them unnecessary. At other times, one of the steps may need to be greatly expanded or otherwise stressed. Recognizing this flexibility of the sequence, let us now consider how each of the main steps may be developed in talks aimed at securing the adoption of the various kinds of propositions discussed on pages 255-258.

THE MOTIVATED SEQUENCE IN A SPEECH URGING THE ADOPTION OF A POLICY

Getting attention

It has been said that all too frequently the attitude of a person about to hear someone else give a talk is "Ho-hum." Obviously, you must change this attitude at the very beginning if you hope to persuade him to believe or to act. The methods for effecting this change are described in Chapter 9. A review of pages 205-213 will remind you how startling statements, illustrations, questions, and other supportive materials can be used to focus wide-awake attention on what you have to say.

Showing the need: Describing the problem

With the audience's attention caught, you are ready to make clear why the policy you propose is needed. To do this, you must show that a definite problem exists; you must point out what is wrong with things as they are and through facts and figures make clear just how bad the situation is. For example, "Last month our plant at Littleton produced

¹¹Leland Stowe, "Peanuts, Children—and You," *Bluebook Magazine*, LXXVI (February 1948), 52. Used with permission of Mr. Stowe.

only 200 carburetors rather than the 300 scheduled. As a result we have had to shut down our main assembly line at Metropolis three times, with a loss of more than \$60,000."

In its full form, a need or problem step requires a fourfold development: (1) *Statement*—a definite, concise statement of the problem. (2) *Illustration*—one or more examples explaining and clarifying the problem. (3) *Ramification*—additional examples, statistical data, testimony, and other forms of support showing the extent and seriousness of the problem. (4) *Pointing*—making clear to the audience how the problem directly affects them. You will not, however, invariably need to use all four of these developmental elements. "Statement" and "pointing" should always be present, but the inclusion of "illustration" and "ramification" will depend upon the amount of detail required to impress the audience. But whether you use the complete development or only a part of it, the need step is exceedingly important in your talk; for it is here that your subject is first definitely related to the needs and desires of your listeners.

Satisfying the need: Presenting the solution

The solution or satisfaction step in a speech urging the adoption of a policy has the purpose of getting your listeners to agree that the program you propose is the correct one. Therefore, it consists of presenting your proposed solution to the problem and proving this solution practicable and desirable. Five items are usually contained in a fully developed satisfaction step: (1) *Statement*—stating the attitude, belief, or action you wish the audience to adopt. (2) *Explanation*—making sure that your proposal is understood. (Often diagrams or charts are useful here.) (3) *Theoretical demonstration*—showing by reasoning how the solution you propose meets the need. (4) *Reference to practical experience*—supplying examples to prove that the proposal has worked effectively where it has been tried. (Use facts, figures, and the testimony of experts to support this contention.) (5) *Meeting objections*—forestalling opposition by answering any objections which might be raised against the proposal.

Just as certain items may at times be omitted from the need step, so also may one or more of these phases be left out of the satisfaction step if the situation warrants. Nor must the foregoing order always be followed exactly. Occasionally, objections can best be met by dealing with them as they arise in the minds of the listeners; in other situations, the theoretical demonstration and reference to practical experience may

be combined. If the satisfaction step is developed properly, however, at its conclusion the audience will say, "Yes, you are right; this is a practicable and desirable solution to the problem you pointed out."

Visualizing the results

The function of the visualization step is to intensify desire. It should picture for the audience how conditions will be in the future (1) if the policy you propose is adopted, or (2) if the policy you propose is not adopted. Because it projects the thinking of the audience into the future, it might just as correctly be called the "projection" step.

The projection aimed at in the visualization step may be accomplished in one of three ways: by the *positive* method, the *negative* method, or the method of *contrast*.

The positive method. When using this method, you describe conditions as they will be in the future if the solution you propose is carried out. Make such a description vivid and concrete. Select a situation which you are quite sure will arise. Then picture your listeners in that situation actually enjoying the conditions which your proposal will produce.

The negative method. This method describes conditions as they will be in the future if your proposal is not carried out. It pictures for your audience the evils or dangers which will arise from failure to follow your advice. Select from the need step the most undesirable aspects of the present situation, and show how these conditions will be aggravated if your proposal is rejected.

The method of contrast. This method combines the two preceding ones. The negative approach is used first, showing the disadvantages accruing from failure to adopt your proposal; then the positive approach is used, showing the advantages accruing from its adoption. Thus, the desirable situation is thrown into strong contrast with the undesirable one.

Whichever method you use, remember that the visualization step must stand the test of reality: the conditions you picture must be capable of attainment. Moreover, they must be made vivid. Let your listeners actually see themselves enjoying the advantages or suffering the evils you describe. The more clearly you can depict the situation, the more strongly the audience will react. The following excerpt, from a speech urging use of fireproof materials in home building, exemplifies a visualization step developed by the method of contrast.

But suppose you do build your home of the usual kindling wood: joists, rafters, and shingles. Some dark night you may awake from your pleasant sleep with the smell of acrid smoke in your nostrils, and the threatening crackle of burning timbers in your ears. You will jump out onto the cold floor and rush to wake up the household. Gathering your children in your arms, you will hurry down the stairs—if they are not already in flames—and out of doors. There you will watch the firemen chop holes in your roof, pour gallons of water over your plaster, your furniture, your piano. You will shiver with cold in spite of the blazing spectacle, and the minds of your children will be indelibly impressed with fright. No fire insurance can repay your family for this horror, even though it may pay a small part of the financial loss.

How much better to use safe materials! Then throughout the long winter nights you can dig down under the warmth of your bedclothes to sleep peacefully in the assurance that your house cannot burn, and that any fire which catches in your furnishings can be confined to a small space and put out. No more the fear of flying sparks. Gone the danger to your wife and children. Sleep—quiet, restful, and secure in the knowledge that the "burning horror" has been banished from your home.¹²

Requesting action or approval

The function of the action step in a policy speech is to translate the desire created in the visualization step into overt action. This step commonly takes the form of a challenge or appeal, an inducement, or a statement of personal intention, as described in Chapter 9. A review of pages 214-219, where these endings are discussed, will suggest their appropriateness as methods for developing this actuating phase.

Beware, however, of making the action step too long or involved. Someone has given this formula for successful public speaking: "Stand up; speak up; shut up." It is well here to emphasize the final admonition: finish your speech briskly and sit down.

A SKELETAL PLAN FOR USING THE MOTIVATED SEQUENCE IN A SPEECH TO PERSUADE

If you develop a persuasive talk in the manner just indicated, your skeleton plan will look something like this:

¹²From a student speech by James Fulton.