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15.280 Communication for Managers
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Interactive Persuasive Presentation

Give an 8- to 10-minute interactive persuasive talk without visual aids to a specific managerial audience about a relevant business topic. You must not only allow, but encourage, questions and comments during the presentation. (We will guarantee that the talk will be interrupted frequently!) Since you must finish within the 8-10 minute time frame, you are responsible for controlling the pace of the presentation so that you can still cover your key points. Interruptions take more time than you expect, so plan accordingly.

You may base the presentation on material in one of your other courses, on a paper or research project you have done, or on your own experience. (Some examples are given below). The situation should include a persuasive purpose and some expected opposition. Because you will want other students in your lab session to ask appropriate questions and make relevant comments, choose a topic they are likely to be familiar with or can understand easily. If you have any doubts about your topic, discuss it with your instructor or TA before you develop the talk.

At the time of the presentation, give your instructor or TA the following information, *in writing*:

- A detailed description of your subject and situation (including your purpose, the audience, the context, and your credibility), so that we can judge how well you have achieved your goals. In describing your purpose, be sure to include what you want the audience to know, think, believe, or do by the time you have completed your talk.
- An outline of your presentation.
- A list of 10 anticipated questions.

Also prepare to take about one minute to describe the audience and context orally to the others in your presentation lab before you begin your presentation. This description should be clearly separated from the beginning of your presentation.

Sample Topics

Here are some sample topics to give you ideas:

- You are a consultant whose charge is to recommend a new networked computer system for a medium-sized, regional investment bank. Two competing manufacturers have submitted attractive proposals with closely competitive bids. You must present and defend your choice to the purchasing and financial committees of your client.
- You are the marketing representative for an international manufacturing corporation based in Taiwan. You must persuade the executive committee of an American firm that your line of state-of-the-art cellular telephones is the best short- and long-term communications solution to their diverse, decentralized requirements.

Due date To be scheduled in oral presentation labs not later than one week after LEC 12

Grade weight 15%

Criteria for grading

Strategy: was your strategy appropriate for your goals, the audience, and the context as you defined them? Did you achieve the goals you set out for this presentation?

Structure and development: Was your structure (direct/indirect) appropriate and easy to follow? Were you able to cover your main points in the time allotted (in spite of interruptions)? Did you use transitions effectively to move from point to point and from Q&A back to your talk? Did your introduction effectively generate audience interest and provide a preview of the structure? Did your conclusion wrap up the talk and highlight next steps, where appropriate?

Delivery: Was your verbal delivery adequately varied in pitch and pace to maintain interest and free of distracting filler words? Did you sound enthusiastic and show interest in the audience's needs? Was your nonverbal delivery relatively confident, engaging, and effective? Did you use gestures in a way that was comfortable for you and not distracting to the audience? Did you move comfortably and effectively in the space available to you? Did you make eye contact with all members of the audience?

Handling questions during presentation: Did you invite questions at the beginning of your talk? Were you able to handle interruptions, questions, and comments professionally? Did you answer questions for members of the audience in a way that satisfied them? Did you keep your presentation on track in spite of interruptions?