Welcome to the presentation on the power of persuasion. In this presentation, we will discuss the concept of persuasion and will discuss how to examine a case from a management and marketing perspective while applying persuasive techniques.

What makes someone persuasive? How do leaders convince their employees to believe in their mission and objectives for their company? There are a variety of techniques that you can employ in both your oral and written work to get people to agree with your point of view.

First, start with the components that make for a sound argument. As we previously discussed, strive to use evidence that is accurate, precise, sufficient, representative, authoritative, and clear. Be sure that it comes from a reliable source.

Second, examine the quality of your causal arguments. Avoid implying causality when only a correlation exists and examine your work for alternative explanations.

Finally, try to eliminate potentially invalid or incorrect underlying assumptions from your argument.

So, what happens when you have done all this but still have readers that do not agree with your argument? Now, you have to try to use persuasive techniques to convince them.

The first technique is to attempt to anticipate your readers’ objections. Here, you have to brainstorm and assume the perspective of your reader. What are their values and beliefs? What objections could they make to your argument? These can stem from potential alternative causes, conflicting and debatable assumptions, or negative evidence that contradicts your claims and undermines your argument.

The best way to overcome these is to acknowledge them and provide a convincing answer or rebuttal in your writing. This shows you have fully examined the issue at hand.

When you come up with a potential objection to your argument and cannot develop a plausible rebuttal, simply concede those points and acknowledge the limitations. For example, if you are looking at US-based organizations, acknowledge that you cannot generalize your findings to organizations from other countries without further research. When you cannot be absolutely certain about a claim, discuss it. Note that while the evidence may be mixed, it is still probable.

When you acknowledge the limitations in your argument, you are actually making it more persuasive, not less persuasive. You have shown that you have fully examined your claims and were thorough in weighing the pros and cons before making your conclusion(s).

This slide provides you some examples of how you can use different phrases to deal with the potential objections that your readers may have to your claims or views. As you can see from these examples, you first acknowledge the objection and then fill in the blank with a persuasive response.

Here we can see some examples of how to increase your persuasiveness by making certain concessions or limiting the claims you use in your writing. Again, you are acknowledging the objection first and then creating an adequate response.
The power of rhetoric should not be underestimated. Just like the appropriate use of language can strengthen your claims, poor selection of words and language can lessen the credibility and persuasiveness of your argument.

There are guidelines for rhetoric that we will discuss.

First, be complete. Present your logic in full and clear detail. Give enough evidence to allow your audience to fully appreciate your logic. Avoid under-developing ideas and allowing assumptions that will enable the readers to come up with their own interpretations...this is not being persuasive. For example, when you are inserting a table, graph, chart, or image in your writing without discussing it, you are enabling your reader to interpret it for themselves and they may arrive at a different interpretation than the one you expected them to develop.

Second, use appropriate tone. Think of your audience and medium for communication. Does it require you to be less or more formal? Using a scholarly tone is more formal and uses more technical language, analysis, and research. A narrative tone on the other hand is much less formal and is characterized by the use of examples, descriptions, stories, and so on. More personal experience (or that of managers, employees, consultants) is used.

Finally, use vivid language. Avoid vague words and providing little evidence or few concrete details. Eliminate catch phrases, clichés, and overly general words; instead, replace them with more precise words that offer precision to your writing as opposed to vagueness.