

## Audience Analysis: Step One in professional communications

Understanding an audience is not as straightforward as it looks!

Most people, most of the time, think first about the content they want to impart.

However, you are not ready to think about the content, or even precisely define your objective, until you have tackled the following questions about your primary and secondary audiences.

- **Demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, education, etc. –**
  - Why is this important, and how will it affect our approach to the content, tone and design of the brochure?
  
- **English language proficiency –**
  - Does some, much or all of the audience have a problem comprehending English? Implications?
  - Does this brochure have to be translated and produced in French and/or other languages?
  
- **Audience's knowledge of the subject matter of the brochure –**
  - Is there a substantial variance in knowledge level – as in some readers are experts, others novices? Implications?
  - If you have a primary and secondary audience, how do you determine if they can be served by one brochure – or you have to address one audience only?
  
- **The self-interested needs of the audience –**
  - What does the audience want/need to know?
  - What are the audience's primary questions?
  - What central ideas or approaches will motivate the audience to be interested in what you are saying or selling? What will turn them on – or off?
  
- **The audience's attitudes and biases –**
  - What does your audience think of your organization?
  - Does the audience harbour negative attitudes or biases that will colour their reaction to your message? Implications?
  - Are you attempting, with this communication, to overcome myths or misconceptions about your organization or program? Implications?
  - What else, with regard to audience attitudes, should we be thinking about?