AUDIENCE ANALYSIS: ESSENTIAL FOR EFFECTIVE SPEAKING

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Abstract

Communication is the key which opens the doors to world for us. Communication is the tool which helps us to send or receive the information. People get to know each other, perceive them, understand, make judgment about others and understand each other by way of communication. It is very important to collect the information about the audience to whom we are addressing. In this paper the essential element of “Audience Analysis” is discussed which fulfills the purpose of Public speaking. Now a days, only conveying message does not work unless and until we get the feedback or proper response. Our speech does not have any sense until it grips the audience. To fulfil this purpose , a public speaker must have to do some important tasks to understand his audience that is Audience analysis. Communication cannot give us desired result. It is done on the basis of age, sex, needs and cultural backgrounds, seating arrangement of the venue and many more such factors.

Key words: Audience, Audience analysis, Speech, Demographic, Situational

INTRODUCTION

“Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation” ~ Robert H. Schuller

Communication is an art which helps the speaker to convey his message to the receiver. To achieve this purpose, it is essential for the speaker to know his audience. Since, Audience is the entire reason for all you are going to deliver a speech. This research reveals that, to understand the audience, analysis is the most essential element of Effective Communication. In reference to Public Speaking, we can get more chances to know about audience and showcase our abilities. It is believed that Audience is not just a passive group of people who have assembled there to listen you. They have gathered there for a sensible reason. They are not only to listen, they listen to understand and respond accordingly. Therefore, Audience analysis becomes a prior most part of your presence.
MEANING

“Audience analysis is the process of examining information about your listeners. That analysis helps you to adapt your message so that your listeners will respond as you wish”

In day to day life we communicate with people and convey our ideas to others. Let’s take an example, if we go on an excursion, we would share our experiences about the trip in a different way to our parents, siblings and to friends. We might say to our bosom friends, "We had a great fun there along with the knowledge provided by the guide." To your parents, you would say ,"It was a very interesting trip, but I miss you there." In such situations, we would draft our message as per our audience.

“In the preparation of a speech or a composition, audience analysis is the process of determining the values, interests, and attitudes of the intended or projected listeners or readers. The goals of clarity, propriety, and persuasiveness dictate that we adapt our arguments, as well as the language in which they are cast, to an audience. Even a well-constructed argument may fail to convince if it is not adapted to your actual audience.”

If we talk about the types or kinds of Audience, there are basically four types of audience are there. For each type of audience, your behavior will be somewhat changed.

If your audience is your Friendly or familiar with you, then, your focus will be on reinforcing the beliefs. In case of Apathetic audience, you have to first convince the people about the topic and its importance for them. If the audience is Uninformed, then the first task is to make them aware about the topic before conveying them the action. And if the audience is Hostile, then their viewpoints must also be respected. This way, you can win their respect as well. It is key that you can present some information that is viewed as new to the audience before asking for any change in their position. This is firstly courteous, but also gives the listener’s ego room to change without feeling demeaned (“based on this new information, I ask you to change”)

Phases of Audience Analysis:

There are three steps in audience analysis that need to be followed before starting the speech, during the speech and Post speech

Audience Analysis deals with these three steps to understand your audience before you speak

Following are the analysis which need to be used while analyzing the audience.
Demographic, Psychological and Situational Analysis

Though Audience analysis does not give any guarantee about the taste of audience, but at least we can hint about their choice. Thus we can select our topic, language and style of presentation as per them. If we are aware about them, only then we can provide them a fruitful communication. To collect all the required information about the audience require an effective skill

Demographic Analysis

Demographic information includes some important factors like gender, age range, marital status, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Sometimes we already know about the age group of persons whom we are going to address, but how we can assess the demographics of the audience whom we are going to address first time? For this purpose we can ask the person who has invited us for that speech.

Age

On the basis of the age factor, you can easily learn about the audience. For example, if your audience belongs to the category of college students who are in first year, you can assume that they have grown up after Mumbai attack, so they have less knowledge about the life of Mumbai before that. If your audience includes people who are above forty, it is quite obvious that they are more aware of the time when people were in wrong notion that they would become AIDS victims just by shaking hands or using a public place and they must be aware about Riots of 1984. The people above seventy have a great remembrance of Indo-Pak wars.

Gender

Gender is a key factor to understand influence which helps to what happens when we talk. It is important to know about the ratio of gender presenting there so that nobody can take the things on heart. It helps you to maintain your credibility.

Culture

It also affects the communication. So it is essential to take care of the audience with which culture they belong to. Suppose, we have audience of North-east India and modulate your speech as per them.
Religion

Religion is also an influential factor. For instance, if we are going to speak on the topic “Communal Riots” and we have Sikh and Hindu both audience, then we should not raise the illustration of riots of 1984. It may hurt the sentiments of Sikhs.

Membership

If the audience belongs to one specific group then it becomes very useful and easy to access the results of audience analysis. We can knit our speech as per their interests, expectations, and needs if we know about the bonding of our audience members.

Education

If we know the education level of our audience, then we can use the vocabulary, language style and examples as per their level.

Psychographic Analysis: This analysis includes attitudes, beliefs and values. A model was presented by Grice and Skinner in which they conveyed that attitudes of people, their beliefs and their behavior has only one basic foundation and that is Values. Values are the foundation of their pyramid model. According to them “A value expresses a judgment of what is desirable and undesirable, right and wrong, or good and evil. Values are usually stated in the form of a word or phrase. For example, most of us probably share the values of equality, freedom, honesty, fairness, justice, good health, and family. These values compose the principles or standards we use to judge and develop our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.”

A person’s lining and disliking can be guessed easily through their attitude. So before starting, it is necessary to know their attitude about the topic.

“A belief is what you believe to be true or false. It depends on the speaker’s belief what is his notion about the attitude of listeners.”

A Value is “A person’s beliefs or standards.”

If a speaker knows attitude, belief and values of the audience, it would be easier to bring the audience to the responses as per desire.
Situational Analysis

Situational analysis focuses on the specific speaking situations. This audience analysis can be done with the help of finding responses of two main questions:

1. What factors are motivating people to hear my speech? What are their interest areas and what are their needs?

   What is the number of the people?

   - What is the size of the venue and also to ensure proper availability of all required stuff like podium, microphone, digital media for visual aids?

   - **Size of Audience**

   The size of the audience matters a lot. As if we are going to address a small size of audience, then it is not that difficult to reach to each audience. But if we are dealing with a large size of audience, then we have to take care of our voice, we have to prepare some presentation or visuals to reach the audience sitting at the last.

   - **Occasion**

   Speaking in front of the audience is found in various places and programs. Few of them can be enjoyable whereas others cannot be. The one we find enjoyable are speaking in front of the people who are gathered in happy ceremonies as awards ceremony or someone’s wedding ceremony. On the other hand, least enjoyable are conveying something bad happening to near and dear ones. While conveying or addressing such moments, keep your tone as that listeners should feel that at least this was not a worst news.

   **Physical Setting**

   The wrong physical setting can spoil the whole show. So it is required to have a prior check on the location or you should reach there well I advance to check the microphone works, adjustment of lighting, room ventilation to make your audience more comfortable.

   **If Audience Analysis – Adapting to your audience as you speak**

   With the help of Non-verbal Audience clues we can judge the audience’s response

   Some of such clues are like Eye contact, facial expression, body postures etc.
IF you feel that the audience is not responding as desired, following techniques can be used to make your audience compatible with the environment. For example, you can share a story, you can quote some example to make it more interesting. Afterwards, you can ask questions also to get their feedback.

2. Audience Analysis- analyzing your audience after you speak

We have different ways to know the audience’s response towards our speech. Such as Nonverbal, Verbal and Survey responses and Non Verbal responses

**Non - verbal responses**

Did the audience applaud? How did they applaud and what type of facial expressions did they have?

Following are the **Verbal responses** can be used to applaud the audience after the speech.

- “Good Job!”
- “That was really interesting?”
- “I have a question about…”

A questionnaire can also be used to know the audience’s response.

**Advantages of Audience analysis**

1. Audience Analysis helps using any offensive language.
2. It helps you to communicate to your audience in the language they understand efficiently.
3. Helps you gain more visibility & credibility
4. It builds high self-esteem.
5. You are perceived as an expert.
6. Your message is easily perceived.

“Understanding your audience is fundamental to the success of any message. You need to adapt your message to fit the audience’s goals, interests and needs.”- Locker, Kitty and Kaczmark Stephen.

Conclusion:

Effective Public Speaking can be a real game-changer for Professionals who wants to get MORE in life, with the help of Audience Analysis. There are three concern areas of audience analysis. The first area of concern is to understand the audience before starting the speech. To achieve this purpose, three types of analysis are done i.e. demographic analysis, psychological analysis and Situational analysis. Demographic analysis involves gender, culture, age, religion and educational level. Psychological Analysis tells us about their attitudes, beliefs and values. Situational analysis covers the area regarding seating arrangement, size of audience, venue and space etc. The next phase is accommodating your
audience when once you start speaking. We can use Non Verbal communication, we can draw the audience’s attention to the required level. The third phase helps speaker to adapt the message to his audience. Without Audience Analysis, Public speakers cannot fulfill the purpose of their communication.

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