

Three steps to better business writing - ethos, logos, pathos

Persuasive writing uses words to convince the reader to listen or to act. Great business writers use persuasive writing in proposals, articles, newsletters, memos, emails, requests for meetings, speeches, and reports.



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Persuasive writing has to sway your reader intellectually and emotionally. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle divided persuasion into three categories of appeals called ethos, pathos, and logos.

1. Ethos - Be credible

By appealing to credibility, writers make their claims more believable. The writer builds on his or her ethos by writing with clarity. The writer will be more credible if there are no errors in the writing, as well as no errors in the subject matter.

2. Logos - Be logical

By appealing to logic, writers persuade. A successful appeal to logos requires tangible evidence, e.g., a quote from a reliable source. The writer appeals to the rationality of the audience.

3. Pathos - Appeal to emotions

By appealing to emotions, writers persuade. This is possibly the most important of the appeals. If you judge a mood, or correctly address feelings about the subject, you can win over an audience.

Most persuasive writing techniques use all three appeals.

Writers Write tip: Be credible, be logical and appeal to your reader's emotions.

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