

Social Influence Through Persuasion: Public Buy-In and Mobilization

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Overview

- In emergency, US security will require DHS to quickly and broadly mobilize of public
- Mass communication through media will be most effective
- Understanding of how communication and persuasion work is necessary
- Persuasion effectiveness is *not* intuitive
 - It is necessary to differentiate between shallow and deep persuasion, and to know *when* persuasion leads to action

Determining the Effectiveness of Persuasive Communications

- Deep persuasion requires that people are convinced that the recommended action makes sense
 - Rationales are necessary when recommendations are not intuitive
- Remembering is not persuasion
 - They may attend and remember the message, but not internalize it or act upon it
 - Shallow persuasion can be influenced by peripheral (non-substantive) information, but it is unlikely to last or lead to action
- People persuade themselves based on how *they* respond to the message
 - Their cognitive elaborations (pro vs con) of message contents determines their deep persuasion and the likelihood that they will act on their attitude change

Compelling Messages

- Does acceptance of message
 - Serve the individuals' salient goals?
 - Express the individuals' core values?
 - Affirm the individuals' worldview?
 - Serve the individuals' self-interest?

Deep Persuasion

- No matter how compelling, agents of attitude change must get people to:
 - Pay attention
 - Carefully think about the message
 - Deep persuasion:
 - lasts longer
 - is more resistant to change, and
 - guides behavior
- Necessary to establish factors that actively support the contents of the message

What Increases Active Support?

- Source of message
 - Expert, credible, reliable, trustworthy
- Recipient of message
 - Mood affects active support
 - Positive moods decrease active processing
 - Negative moods increase active processing

Resistant to Counter-Attack and Likely to Guide Behavior

- Deep persuasion
- Attitudes that are associated with:
 - High levels of confidence
 - Knowledge
 - Importance
 - Accessibility

Recommendations

- Effective means deep persuasion that:
 - Makes sense
 - Is meaningful
 - Is resistant to counter-persuasion
 - Leads to appropriate behaviors, even long after message is processed
- **We know very little about security-related persuasion**
- Research is needed that examines the characteristics and dissemination of security-related persuasion:
 - The message
 - The source
 - The context
 - Recipient characteristics