## O=Organization

The last part of PAFEO is organization. Think about the short little presentation you are going to do tomorrow. Based on your knowledge and analysis of your audience, and your objective for presenting to this audience, choose an organizational plan that best meets your needs. Some material or presentations will work in several organizational patterns so you might want to consider more than one pattern before you make your final decision as to “fit.” Here are some options, most of which you will recognize:

* Chronological order for simple, ordered instructions or reports.
* Problem (three parts) and solution (one part) for audiences with low knowledge of the issues.
* Problem (one part) and solution (three parts) for audiences with high knowledge of the issues.
* Current situation and proposed situations for many persuasive presentations.
* Inductive (general to specific) or deductive (specific to general) reasoning for explanations.
* Pros and cons (or compare and contrast) for simple analyses or evaluations.
* Decision-making pattern for complex issues.
* Bad-news pattern for information the audience doesn’t want to hear.

### Problem-Solution Pattern

For most persuasive presentations, the problem-solution format works the easiest. If your audience is low on the persuasive continuum—if they have little knowledge about the issue—you will want to spend some time explaining the specifics of the problem. If your audience knows all about the problem, you can spend the majority of your time considering a choice of solutions.

### Decision-Making Pattern

This outlining strategy reminds you to explain the criteria you used when determining how to solve your problem. If you establish criteria first, then show how potential solutions measure up against those criteria, your decision develops its own support as you move through your presentation.

Here is the format for this pattern:

* Define and limit problem
* Establish checklist of criteria
* Identify possible solutions
* Evaluate solutions based on criteria
* Select best solution
* Discuss implementation

### Bad News Pattern

When giving people information that they would rather not have, select the bad news pattern. This organizational strategy allows you to buffer the bad news with a neutral or mildly positive statement first. Be careful that the material you choose is appropriate for the message that is coming; you don’t want to compliment them on being perfect employees and then fire them.

Here is the format for this pattern:

* Cushion audience
* Bridge with transition
* Deliver bad news
* Explain reasons
* Suggest alternatives
* Rebuild good will

The “deliver the bad news” and “explain reasons” steps are interchangeable. Some speakers would rather get the bad news over with and then explain while others would rather explain first. Whichever way you choose, it is most important that you offer good reasons. The phrase, “It’s company policy,” is not enough.

The bad news pattern includes alternatives—specific replacements for whatever it is they want but you cannot give. For example, an important client may have requested that certain products be delivered by specific dates. If you are unable to meet the request, your alternatives might be to deliver a slightly different product on the date requested, or to discount the price to offset late delivery. Offering alternatives almost always reduces the sting of bad news.

Complete the bad news pattern by rebuilding good will with your audience, thus sandwiching the negative information between audience-focused messages.