

Student A, Student B, Student C

March 17, 2015

BUS 714 – Greg Christensen

Week 7 – Group Write

### Project Narrative and Delegations

Our project is a proposal for a settlement based on an ongoing dispute between “Uber Technologies Inc.” and the workers’ union “Bay Area Teamsters”. We choose to elaborate on a burning debate involving the renowned American, multinational, online car-hailing company and the local branch of the strongest labor union in North America. Our team of three fictionally incarnates the “Public Relations Team” of Uber and addresses the following problem before a Teamsters’ representation: whether Uber should continue operating its business by classifying its drivers as “1099 - independent contractors” or must characterize them as “employees”, the prime demand of Teamsters.

Acknowledging from the beginning that we will confront a hostile and biased audience we have to tactfully maneuver our presentation to not only persuade Teamsters that self-employment is the right status for our drivers but most importantly to make them see us favorably by showing them an attractive “What is in for them?” aspect of our argument. In our case, we choose to throw in the game the “California App-based Drivers Association”, or “CADA”. CADA serves the purpose of “aiming to the heart” of our audience and underlining what will be the benefit for them, as Teamsters, if we continue operating in alignment with our claim.

**Comment [GC1]: Commas and periods go *inside* quotation marks** – Unless there is a parenthetical citation following the quoted material, commas and periods always go *inside* the quotation marks, not outside (and not both places) – even with source titles that are placed in quotation marks. Please proofread carefully for this error pattern in your work.

**Comment [GC2]: Effective statement of purpose / problem statement** – it succinctly contextualizes the analysis and discussion to follow by effectively framing the problem you’re responding to and foregrounding the primary rationale(s) for your project goals in a clear, concise and articulate way. This is just what we want in a statement of purpose and/or problem statement for this kind of writing and project work. Good.

**Comment [GC3]: Precisely.** You’ve crystallized the core of what the Rogerian approach is about and does best when understood (as you clearly do here) and deployed smartly (we’ll see about that..)

**Very good.** You’re perceiving the necessary connection between strategy and message, form and content here: the occasion for argument that you’re choosing matches the intentional thrust of your argument. Very good reading of the rationale for structuring the argument as you have.

**Good** – this as you point out is the Rogerian piece again, in part. And you’re wisely letting anticipated rebuttals and challenges drive a rethinking and a further clarification of your established positions, just as you should be doing.

After meticulously refining our claim, defining who we are and to whom we address the argument, we proceeded to tasks delegation. Although the whole formulation of our argument was a collaborative effort, we separated fields of concentration for each one member. David was assigned to scrutinize Uber's marketing strategy and reveal existing criticism against various aspects of Uber's operations, and finally to showcase how CADA can serve as a middle ground of the debate. Larry was assigned to research and address the Teamsters' position. Through his detailed research, Larry had to convince the opposing side that we fully understand and respect their concerns as a Union. He had to showcase that Uber and other transportation companies can coexist since they offer different services. Jamie was assigned to find all the necessary information and supporting statistics regarding the pros and cons of driving for Uber and juxtapose it to being a taxi driver. She was also responsible for setting it clear that we are a technological corporation that provides a marketplace and not another transportation company, a major differentiation that appropriately contextualizes our claim.

In order to engage visual learners, we illustrated our key findings by using Prezi software. Furthermore, we distributed pamphlets to the audience containing the core messages of our argument so as to expand our presentation's impact out of the classroom. Finally, we made fake Identification Cards as Uber representatives, which we were wearing during the whole presentation to add a formal tone and gain credibility points from our appearance.

**Comment [GC4]:** An effective enumeration of the tasks involved and how and why you've divided them between team members as you have. Good.

**Comment [GC5]:** Explanation of alternative persuasive strategies. Yeah, good. This demonstrates a very intentional and comprehensive approach to meeting your fickle, even hostile audience on multiple and varied levels – all the more important given the difficulties you confront in persuading them of the efficacy of your ostensibly opposing positions to theirs, yes? Smart use of communicative strategies to amplify your message in real ways. Very good.

### The principal arguments

The Union claims Uber must classify its drivers as “employees” and provide them all the benefits of the “employer-employee” relationship. We, as Uber, claim that our company must continue conducting its business by collaborating with independent contractors as its drivers, a status more beneficial for them than being our employees. Our drivers seek independence and flexibility in their working environment. In addition, the majority of them drive part-time as a side income or as a transitory occupation while switching jobs. This loose level of commitment and shapeable characteristic of the freelance driving indicates that there is no reason for them to be considered employees and be unionized. Out of goodwill, we present CADA, a branch of Teamsters, which can serve as a channel for freelance drivers to stand for their rights and get collective bargaining benefits. Through CADA, Teamsters still get the membership fee, and app-based drivers have a unified voice to achieve better standards of living and working.

### A fact-laden argumentation following the Rogerian structure

An existing and controversial debate between two existing entities, Uber and Teamsters, is the springboard of our argument. We clearly take a position on the challenging conflict and set a straightforward claim as Uber representatives. We conducted extensive research primarily on the Web and the evidence we found will buttress our argument. We also interviewed a real Uber driver (Jason) to gain insight about the pros and cons of riding for Uber. Being aware of our demanding audience we paid close attention to the opposing voice of our argument. It was more than obvious that a Rogerian structure was a one-way road to formulating a convincing position. Our intention is to showcase from the introduction of our speech that we respect and take into deep consideration Teamsters’ opinion. That is why we took the initiative to “host” the presentation. However, their opinion cannot work in our business context. We are a technology company providing an application that creates a digital marketplace, characterized by flexibility and independence. We are not a taxi company. In this context, our claim is

**Comment [GC6]:** Very nice elucidation of key concepts here. This definition and explanation work is quite important contextual detail for setting up your proposal, and it’s thorough and well-handled here. Good.

This is a very systematic thinking through and narrowing down of the problem and the message, just as you should be doing in a visual/verbal pitch.

**Comment [GC7]:** This needs clarification, attenuation. The metaphor may be wrong here, I’m not sure. It’s not clear to me why a Rogerian structure is a “one-way road,” or if your group thinks that’s a good or bad thing in this context. Your statement suggests you think a Rogerian approach is the only route to success here, or, conversely, that it’s an inflexible approach – do I have those right? But it’s neither of those things in fact. Do you see my confusion here? If you mean this statement to be a positive descriptor of the approach, it’s not reading that way yet.

Rethink and flesh this out a little more.

**Comment [GC8]:** Very good. You’re once again internalizing the real value and utility of a Rogerian approach to your proposal goals.

valid. What differentiates our argument from a classical oration is exactly the emphasis we put on underscoring the benefits for Teamsters if we continue working with 1099 drivers. Alongside with the indirect benefits of our existence, such as equal regulations for both Uber and taxi drivers, we invest a significant amount of time in presenting CADA as the middle ground that can facilitate a plausible settlement. While deploying the Rogerian structure, we purposefully swing twice through Teamsters position, the context in which our position is valid, and the benefit for Teamsters if they adopt our claim. Each shift is coupled with a change in the presenter, making the presentation more dynamic and unexpected. CADA is a real association, a local branch of Teamsters, that can bridge the gap between the two conflicting positions. We focus on CADA because we know that the Teamsters will by definition disregard our argument if nothing beneficial for them, as Union, is not addressed.

Another extremely important feature of our presentation is the anticipated questions we will confront from the audience. Knowing how skeptical, even aggressive, our audience will be, we have to go the extra mile to be fully prepared for the post-presentation part. The Teamsters will definitely attempt to entrap us by tricky questions regarding controversial aspects of our corporation, like the taxation structure we follow, even if they are not directly related to our argument, only for the sake of creating negative impressions and weakening our credibility. That being said, apart from the actual presentation, we have to dive deep into this controversial issues and prepare answers to tackle the Questions & Answers time efficiently. At the same note, the sensitive approach of the anticipated questions and objections of our audience will give us an early vantage to more clearly formulate the limitations and weak points of our own argument during the self-evaluation process.

### The deployed appeals to the audience

We begin with an appeal to emotion showing an image of pensive Henry Ford while we address a quote on innovation. This is a calculated move to create an emotional connection between our audience and a well-known innovator in the automobile industry. We plan that this will soften Teamsters feelings

**Comment [GC9]:** Beautifully conceived here.

Good focus on the natural and intentional linkage between argumentative strategy and the audience experience of those rhetorical choices you're making in your persuasive constructions, here and throughout. It's exactly this kind of careful thinking about why you're arguing as you are (so as to make the greatest impact on your chosen audience, though this should go without saying by now) that I'm looking for in a descriptive analysis of your own group's thought process, particularly now as you move toward a more metacognitive set of conclusions about the efficacy of your own argumentative work. Nicely laid out.

And again, you're wisely letting anticipated rebuttals and challenges drive a rethinking and a further clarification of your established positions, just as you should be doing.

You're also implicitly differentiating yourselves from competing proposals and using their failures to reinforce your strengths as a project and organization. That's a Rogerian strategy too. Nicely done.

**Comment [GC10]:** Very good enumeration of the kinds of challenges you smartly anticipate to your proposal and how you plan to address them – both in terms of your physical solutions to those anticipated problems but also in terms of the strength of your rhetorical solutions here. This discussion falls into the category of “questions we will have for you [as your imagined audience] that you should be anticipating,” right? By anticipating problems and addressing them before we get a chance to raise them, you get the opportunity to control the conversation, to frame those potential problems or challenges in ways that are the most responsive to your solutions, right? Don't run from controversy or perceived weakness in your own constructions. Instead, embrace them and let them reframe your problem sets for you. Allow them to transform into obstacles that become yours strength in helping you further sell your solutions. Very good work.

toward us who represent the innovation in technology that is changing their world. The use of images is a common theme in our presentation. Many of them are to provide a pathos. The images of taxi and Uber drivers working together happily are meant to implicitly impress on our audience the idea that it is possible for both of them to work together without conflict. Another element we are implementing is rhetorical questions as a way to emotionally engage our audience. For example, in our introduction, we ask the audience to think of one company that had not faced push back on innovation.

Both our group and the audience represent business entities in this argument, and we understand that logos will make a particularly strong impact. We begin by introducing ourselves as individuals who had years of experience as taxi drivers and expertise over transportation services. This is an explicit attempt to establish credibility with our audience. We make sure to include statistics to support our claim with the number of hours Uber drivers spend in the car driving per week. The triads are also a tool we use to deploy logos in our presentation. When we present the Teamsters position, we use a set of three to articulate our statements about the additional regulations traditional taxi drivers have to comply with as compared to app drivers. These marshaled rhetorical devices help us to generate emotions to our audience (pathos), improve their receptiveness to our fact-based messages (logos), and present our team as trustworthy communicators (ethos).

### The limitations of our persuasive capacity

Our group chose a difficult and controversial subject, that helped challenge ourselves and think outside our comfort zone. Many of our peers commented on our compelling and convincing presentation. We successfully persuaded most of our classmates, “Teamsters,” to side with Uber in continuing to classify our drivers as independent contractors. A few of our classmates were a bit harder to convince, an indicator that our presentation could be more persuasive. Our claim needs to be presented clearly in the first portion of our opening statement. This claim should also be repeated throughout our presentation to successfully drive home our position. Our audience had a hard time understanding the problem as well as

**Comment [GC11]: Effective description of and justification** for your specific audience appeal choices as they relate to your product and to your target audience. I really like that you’re thinking carefully about the connections between the kind of speech you choose to use and its use value as persuasive strategy given your chosen content *and* your audience. Good.

the solution, and more importantly, why either is important. This should be made apparent and help segue between Uber and Teamsters' slides. We need to clearly define why CADA is best for Uber and for Teamsters, and how both organizations will benefit from adopting the association. These things end up being covered in the question and answer portion of the presentation and help bridge the gap between our data, our claim, and our solution. Ideally, we would prefer our key message to stand unambiguously before the question and answer time.

Our team understands how important the Rogerian structure is to support our claim. In fact, this would be the only way to convince the Teamsters of our position. Although the general feedback from our classmates is positive, we realize we didn't answer all their queries in advance, probably due to a missed assessment of their knowledge on the particular subject. We engage our audience through real, captivating speech, rather than overloading them with busy and confusing visuals. We understand that the key to a successful presentation is in the presenter. We succeeded, if not wildly so, in making the audience respond with keen interest to our argument and spark an informative debate over the use of 1099 workers. Consequently, after weighing the strengths and flaws of our presentation we believe there are particular points that require refinement. Despite the aforesaid weaknesses, our argument stands as a persuasive one.

**Comment [GC12]:** Absolutely – and that's the key lesson here in terms of how well you should be proofreading and preparing your work, and anticipating challenges, yes? Good self-critique here.

**Comment [GC13]:** Effective metacognitive synthesis, post project, of the limitations, challenges, and lessons of your proposal. Clearly these perceived deficiencies would need to be addressed in a revision of this argument and proposal work – and that's precisely the reason you *should* be asking yourself or your task group to engage in a self-critical meta-narrative of a project's goals and aims, and success or failure as persuasive speech if it's in the draft stages. Great work.

**Comment [GC14]:** I agree, particularly given your chosen parties here – Uber and Teamsters. It would be particularly useful not to sabotage the relationship with categorical positions from the outset that you would likely find in a more classical presentation of argument. This one calls for a cooperative approach if a solution is to be had. I'm really glad you see that here. A Rogerian approach is not the solution in all scenarios, but it likely could be here.

**Comment [GC15]:** Sure. A useful reminder of the importance of understanding your audience, deeply, before making a pitch to them.

**Comment [GC16]:** Perhaps not so hard to do in this community, given our knowledge of the players and the industry coming in, and the strong positions on both sides this debate seems to incite.

**Comment [GC17]:** At minimum, yes. You've done very good analytical and metacognitive work here looking at the structure and limitations of your or any given well built argument construction.

Reference List

- Beyer, S. (2015, March 08). *How To Solve The Uber vs Taxi Conflict? Medallion Reform*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/scottbeyer/2015/05/08/how-to-solve-the-uber-vs-taxi-conflict-medallion-reform/#1eb04f2680ef>
- Frumin, A. (2014, December 12). *The complicated politics of Uber*. Retrieved from <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/the-complicated-politics-uber>
- Goldmark, A. (2013, August 2013). *In California, They're Not Taxis, They're "Transportation Network Companies"*. Retrieved from <http://www.wnyc.org/story/311452-california-theyre-not-taxis-theyre-transportation-network-companies/>
- Goode, L. (2011, June 17). *Worth it? An App to Get a Cab*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2011/06/17/worth-it-an-app-to-get-a-cab/>
- Hawkins, A. J. (2016, January 27). *The bullet that Lyft just dodged is still coming for Uber*. Retrieved from <http://www.theverge.com/2016/1/27/10841138/uber-lyft-drivers-settlement-class-action-lawsuit-California>
- Lawler, R. (2015, January 22). *Uber Study Shows Its Drivers Make More Per Hour And Work Fewer Hours Than Taxi Drivers*. Retrieved from <http://techcrunch.com/2015/01/22/uber-study/>
- Mishel, L. (2015, November 16). *Uber Is Not the Future of Work*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/11/uber-is-not-the-future-of-work/415905/>
- Munroe, S. (2014, July 25). *How Much of Fare Do Taxi Drivers Keep?* Retrieved from <http://work.chron.com/much-fare-taxi-drivers-keep-22871.html>
- Nairi. (2014, February 10). *Insurance for uberX with Ridesharing*. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.uber.com/insurance-for-uberx-with-ridesharing/>
- O' Keefe, B., Jones, M. (2015, October 22). *How Uber plays the tax shell game*. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2015/10/22/uber-tax-shell/>

Redmond, T. (2014, July 10). *Uber's tax-avoidance strategy costs government millions. How's that for "sharing?"*. Retrieved from <http://www.48hills.org/2014/07/10/ubers-tax-avoidance-strategy-costs-government-millions/>

Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2015/10/22/uber-tax-shell/>

Tomio, G. (2013, September 19). *California Becomes First State To Regulate Ridesharing Services Lyft, Sidecar, UberX*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/tomiogeron/2013/09/19/california-becomes-first-state-to-regulate-ridesharing-services-lyft-sidecar-uberx/#30d0248067fe>

Uber. *Shifting expectations Finding better ways for cities to move, work, and thrive*. Retrieved from <https://www.uber.com/helping-cities/>

Union Facts. (2016). *Teamsters (IBT) Financial Trends*. Retrieved from <https://www.unionfacts.com/money/Teamsters/>

Weiner, J. (2015, February 20). *The hidden costs of being Uber driver*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/get-there/wp/2015/02/20/the-hidden-costs-of-being-an-uber-driver/>

Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association - Teamsters Local 117. (2015). *Taxicab Operators Sue Uber for Violation of the Law*. Retrieved from [http://www.teamstertaxi.org/taxicab\\_operators\\_sue\\_uber\\_for\\_violation\\_of\\_the\\_law](http://www.teamstertaxi.org/taxicab_operators_sue_uber_for_violation_of_the_law)

Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association vs. Uber Technologies Inc. (2014, March 24). *Complaint for Injunctive Relief and Monetary Damages*. Retrieved from [http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/teamsters117/pages/808/attachments/original/1395698536/2014\\_03\\_24\\_COM\\_final.pdf?1395698536](http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/teamsters117/pages/808/attachments/original/1395698536/2014_03_24_COM_final.pdf?1395698536)