The central route to persuasion is most likely to occur when a person feels motivated to carefully think about a specific message. In this route the message needs to be strong and have good quality arguments. Persuasion of the message then comes from whether or not the person has thoughts consistent with the message, which could cause an attitude change or if a person thinks of counterarguments to the message which could lead to no attitude change. For example, the anti smoking Truth ads portrayed how bad smoking is and usually stated a couple facts and statistics about cigarettes or what could happen to a person who smokes. This is an example of central route processing because a person either agrees with smoking or not, this type of commercial motivates a person to think about the dangers of smoking or to create counterarguments against this ad campaign.

The peripheral route to persuasion is most likely to occur when a person is unable to carefully think about a message or is distracted by irrelevant cues in the message. If this type of persuasion takes place an individual is not able to listen to the quality or content of the message, however this individual may still have an attitude change but it will be based on irrelevant cues and no critical thinking. For example, old smoking ads used to show beautiful men and women smoking cigarettes, showing that it’s cool to smoke. Those beautiful people can become distracters and someone watching these ads may only focus on them and not on the harmful side effects smoking can cause.