Delivering Effective Messages – Advice for Community Engagement

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Today’s Agenda

The “Strategic” Part of Strategic Communications
Messaging and Storytelling
Contemporary Thinking on Channels
Measurement
Take-Home Benefits Along The Way

• Understanding how deliberate communication strategies can improve your organization’s success
• The key elements that must be present to plan, execute and measure outcomes
• Guidance that puts all of the options into perspective so you know which to use when
Who is this guy?

Matt Kucharski – Executive Vice President

• 25 years public relations and communications experience
• Expertise in marketing, crisis communications, employee communications and community relations
• Adjunct faculty member at the University of Minnesota
• National Board, Pheasants Forever
• DNR, LSOHC, FLARA, MCWD, GTCUW and other acronyms...

When not working at the office, home or the airport, Matt is SCUBA diving, fishing or hunting somewhere.
Your Organization’s Top Priorities?
Why You’re Communicating

• Attract, retain and engage *employees and volunteers*
• Find and hold on to enthusiastic *long-term investors*
• Create a *favorable community, regulatory and industry environment* to operate your business
• Draw in new *advocates* – and keep your existing ones!

:Get People to Do What You Need Them to Do!
U.S. Information Barrage

- 500,000 billboards
- 7,500 newspapers
- 20,000 periodicals
- 350 million TV sets
- 265 million PCs
- 650 million radios
- 3 billion books sold per year
- 150 billion pieces of postal mail
- 110 million websites
- 300 million active Facebook users (Almost 30%, are 35-54)
- 24 million photos uploaded to Facebook daily

How many emails will you receive in the next two hours?
Information Age Clutter

• Either you break through the clutter or become part of it – your choice.
Strong Reputations Drive Business Success

Organization Strategy

Influenced By:
• Leadership Vision
• Strategic Plan
• Annual Operating Plans
• Marketplace Realities & Trends
• Employee/HR Development
• Financial Objectives
• Regulatory Environment

Stakeholder Perception

Influenced By:
• Messaging
• Media Coverage
• Customer Satisfaction
• Stakeholder Trust/Confidence
• Employee Engagement
• Community/NGO Sentiment
• Competitive Positioning
• Social Media Conversations
• Influencer Perceptions
• Internal Comms
• External Comms
Goal: External Perceptions that Align With Organization Priorities

Strategy and Reputation

Brand Alignment

Driven by Performance Against Plans -- ACTIONS

Driven by Multiple Information Sources -- COMMUNICATIONS
Personal and Corporate Reputation (aka “Your Brand”) is... 

\[ \sum \text{Acts} + \sum \text{Information} \]

*Performance Recognized*
Communicating Effectively
Communication Is A System!

Sender  Messages/Channel  Receiver

Common Environment

NOISE!
It’s About You – And It’s About Them – Make it a Two-Way Dialog

Your Organization

- Community
- Suppliers & Partners
- Local Community Universities Associations
- Media
- Government & Regulators
- Employees
- Standards Bodies
You Must Communicate at EVERY STAGE in the Decision Process
And You Need to Build Networks Among Your Stakeholders

\[ V = N^2 \]

**Who is in Your Stakeholder Network and How Robust is it?**
The 3M’s of Effective Communications

• The Message: WHAT do you need to communicate?

• The Messenger: Who is the best SOURCE for the Message?

• The Method: What is the best AVENUE for the Message to reach the audience?
Communications is a Strategic Process
Communicating for Action

- Audience Research
- Environmental Scan
- Organizational/Business Goals
- Publics/Audiences
- Audience Profile
- Desired Behaviors
- Action Plan
- Measurement/Evaluation

Messages
You Need to Do Research – Even if it’s Informal

• Check your assumptions
• Do they like you, respect you or revile you?
• Understand what their alternatives are
• Determine loyalty – willingness to support to you – or block you
• Gauge understanding – do they “get it” and where do they “get it” from?
• It’s quick, it’s cost-effective, and it keeps you from making dumb mistakes
If You Don’t Have Objectives, You Won’t Communicate Effectively

• Your Strategic Goals
  - What do you want to accomplish
  - What ACTIONS are you going to take to get there?
  - The foundation for what you actually communicate

• Your Communications Goals
  - HOW will communications help you accomplish the above?
  - Go beyond “moving the needle,” “getting support,” and “creating buzz” – these are meaningless
Take Time to Truly Understand Your Audiences

• Who are they?
  - Demographics
  - Psychographics
• What do you WANT from them?
• What do they THINK today?
• What do they DO today?
• What’s PREVENTING THEM from acting?
• What are the rewards TO THEM?

_The Fundamental Foundation for Your Key Messages And Your Communication Strategy_
And Be Clear on What You Want From Them

START doing something ...
STOP doing something ...
CONTINUE doing something ...
LET US do something we want to do ...

Behavior change – action – is the ultimate end result.
Why Have Key Messages?

• The key points you want people to remember
• Incite audiences to take action
• Anchor – keep you on-track and focused
• A means to effectively communicate!
Ways to Develop Messages

• The NEED + YOUR RESPONSE

  - “We need to protect our environment from invasive species. XYZ has develop 3 easy steps to help you remember to check your boat”

• Something COOL with RELEVANCE

  - “Our organization was the first to develop a comprehensive AIS plan. That means the practices we put in place are based on experience and not guesswork.

• Addressing a BARRIER

  - “Some people don’t believe that they have an impact on AIS, when in reality we have AIS because of that exact mindset.”

• The “HOTEL BAR” conversation

  - “If you want your lake to look like a bowl of pea soup, keep using that phosphorous fertilizer”
It’s Greek to Me!

• Ethos – “Listen to me because I have EXPERIENCE in this”

• Pathos – “Listen to me because this is IMPORTANT”

• Logos – “Listen to me because this MAKES SENSE”

All Three Are Key to Persuasive Communication
Telling a story!

Stage Setting – what’s life like today?
Conflict – what’s wrong with the current state?
Resolution – what’s being done about it?
Outcome – how’s life different as a result?

*People Remember Stories More Than They Remember Facts – Tell The Story First*
Organizing Messages

Less time

Name/Identity
Theme or Central Idea
Elevator Story
Key Messages
Proof Statements

More time
Determining the Right Communications Channels
Control vs. Credibility

Control

Credibility
Proximity to the Issue

Interested

Moderately affected

Close to those directly affected

Directly affected

Less Personal

More Personal
My, how the world has changed...

- My mom sends my daughter a birthday letter and money...
- ...I email my daughter to remind her to send a thank-you note...
- ...my daughter texts me back to say she will...
- ...and then posts a message to Grandma on Facebook...
- ...promising to Facetime or Skype her later in the week...
Communication in the Digital Age

- Explosion of Internet, social media and digital communications have drastically changed the way information is received and produced
- “Democratization” of the creation, distribution and consumption of media content
- Reaching target audience(s) through multiple outlets
- Accelerates communication .... Transparency is key
How Do We Measure This Stuff?
The First Reaction -- Fight or Flight
Why Is It So Difficult?

- It takes time
- It takes money
- We’re dealing with human behavior
- External factors
- There are very few 1:1 correlations
- Integrated programs
- Viewed as justification rather than insight
- Distinguishing between “value” and “ROI”
We HAVE to Measure...

- Prioritize work
- Justify the spend
- Refine a program
- Move from anecdotal to factual
- Shift from “reactive” to “proactive” mode
Three Levels of Measurement

- Outputs – was the work completed?
- Outtakess – who was reached?
- Outcomes – what behaviors actually changed?
Summary

• Communications has purpose – it helps your organization accomplish its goals.

• It’s all about changing behavior – getting an audience to burn a calorie

• Messages, Messengers and Methods

• A process – don’t be afraid to evaluate and adjust, but consistency is more important than creativity.
Questions?
Thank You