



Mastering Media and Communications

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**COMMUNICATIONS CANNOT ALWAYS BE CONTROLLED;
KEY MESSAGES CAN.**



STARTING FROM A DEFICIT

Media attitudes about government



Dull



Inaccessible



Late



Not Understandable



Callous



STARTING FROM A DEFICIT

Media attitudes about government



Dull ----- Interesting, Engaging



Inaccessible ----- Available



Late ----- Timely, Current



Not Understandable ----- Clear, Direct



Callous ----- Empathetic, Concerned



MOST COMMON MISTAKE...



NOT FULLY PREPARING YOUR MESSAGE



SHAPING THE MESSAGE

Think what you want to have happen as you prepare



Educate



Persuade



Encourage use of programs and services



Call to action



Engage



What Makes a Message Meaningful/Memorable?

People Not Facts

Power Words

Benefits Not Features

Direct

Positives Not Negatives

Bridges



What Does a Key Message Look Like?

“The (X) project is valuable because (Y) and (Z)”

“It’s essential we share knowledge with other communities on the issue of (X) because...”

“(X) must take action on the issue of (Y), otherwise (Z) will happen”

“(X) is a problem and (Y) is the solution”



Power Words

Grab Media Attention

Urgent, Immediate, Critical, Crucial

Different, New, Exciting, Unique,

Emphasize, Important, Prioritize, Underscore

Empathize, Hopeful, Meaningful, Understandable

Surprising, Unusual, Fascinating, Extraordinary

Strong, Tough, Energize



Messaging for Media

27 - 9 - 3

- 27 words
- 9 seconds to say
- 3 supporting statements strengthening one core message



Messaging for Media

3 Bucket Rule (Gerard Braud)



Things we must say



Things we will only talk about if asked



Things we cannot discuss



Perfecting Your Message



Write out your message



Test it out



Speak it out loud several times over



Practice sticking to the script



Bridging

Phrases to get you back to your message

“What concerns me even more....”

“The most important part of this is...”

“If we look at this with a fresh perspective....”

“Bottom line, people care about...”

“I have heard that too, but the real focus should be...”

“That’s a good/interesting point, especially when you consider...”



Turning Negatives to Positives

Think of difficult questions differently and answer in the positive

You Hear:

Your efforts to reduce/eliminate X have been ineffective; how can you say our community is safer/better off?

Think of the Positive Side

- We are safer/better off today due to 1, 2, and 3
- Our efforts have been effective in 1, 2, and 3



On the Positive

Example: Your County's infrastructure is greatly declining, with many bridges and roads nearing failure. You vote to raise the local gas tax.



Positive Messaging

It is crucial that we repair and maintain our roads and bridges to keep our residents safe and ensure emergency vehicle access.

Better road conditions mean less time in traffic and more quality time for families to spend together.

Getting goods and products more easily in and out of our County is valuable to our economy.

On the Positive

Example: You can't support a popular Parks project ...the construction of a multi-field soccer complex...because it hasn't been vetted with the neighborhood. You're the district commissioner and you've gotten complaint calls by the dozens.



Positive Messaging

Youth sports are important for child development. Once the neighborhood understands and supports the project, I can support it.

Neighbors were surprised by the project. As a homeowner, I understand why they would want to be included in the planning.

It's vital for both the park and the neighborhood to be good neighbors and to consider each others' values.



On the Positive

Example: A very old library in a dwindling neighborhood is slated to be torn down. Residents demand it be saved. Instead, you voted in support of a new regional library that's about 5 miles away.



Positive Messaging

This community is changing and I empathize with residents. The library served people well in its time, but it's outdated and deteriorating.

The loss of the library building is tough, but we can use the land it's on for a neighborhood park that's been needed for a long time.

Trends show more citizens want technology and innovation centers. The new regional library will provide digital services, technology classes and a place to engineer and build.



On the Positive

Example: The County's adult day care program has a very high client cost and a long waiting list. You vote to transfer the County's funding to an established non-profit that's been caring for seniors for decades in your community.



Positive Messaging

We are pleased to partner with *Neighborly Seniors*, well-known and respected for its exceptional care for seniors with diminishing capacities.

Working with *Neighborly Seniors* means we can expand both the size and scope of assistance to families dealing with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other dependent conditions.

As our population ages, this partnership will allow us to better plan, prepare and serve seniors and their families.

Supporting the Message



Fact Sheets



Maps, Drawings, Photographs



Data, Graphics



Key Messages Solve Problems

Quoted more; Misquoted less

Ensures consistency and accuracy

Eliminates information overload

Helps build buy-in



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