



Strategic Communications and Message Development

Presentation to EERE BioComms Group

December 17, 2015



Communicate With Intent

KEARNS ⚡ WEST

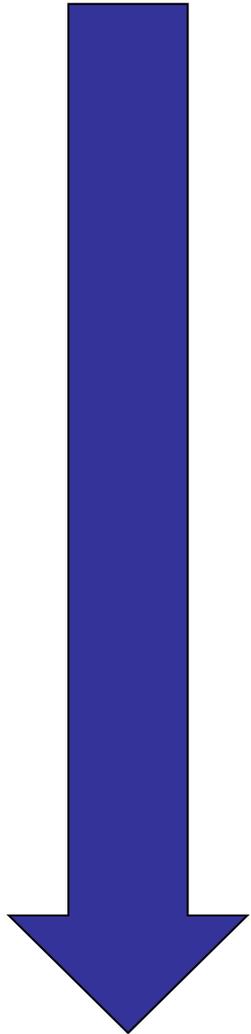
Communication has no intrinsic value of its own – it must be tied to an objective.

Strategic purpose is the difference between talking and *messaging*.



Strategic Communications Planning

Process



Define Objective

Map Barriers and Obstacles

Gauge Opposition

Establish Checkpoints

Identify Audiences

Research

Develop Messaging

Develop Plan for Execution

Define Objectives

Planning

Objectives may be...

Strategic or organizational goals:

- Legislation
- Policy approval or rejection
- Budget allocation

Tactical accomplishments related to a longer-term objective:

- Build credibility with committee staff
- Influence a third-party to lend support

Or indirect aspects of influence:

- Raise awareness about the potential of biofuels
- Establish Lab scientists as notable voices on energy

Objectives must be...

- Specific
- Attainable
- Measureable



Map Obstacles And Challenges

Planning

- Mark barriers
- Opponents and other forces of resistance
- Set measurable checkpoints along the way
- Identify audiences and use research to understand their perspective, interests, motivations and concerns



EERE Audience Profiles

Policy Elites

Includes staffers, talking heads, scientific community, DC insiders, etc.

Important role in persuading thinking of decision makers

Typically concentrated inside the Beltway

Highly sophisticated, but often inundated with information



EERE Audience Profiles

General Public

Indirect, but vital audience

Typically less sophisticated on details of science, economics or policy, but well tuned to broad questions, starting with, “why biofuels?”

Broader implications for climate, national security, economy, and messages about personal impact resonate



EERE Audience Profiles

Decision Makers

Important policy decisions are made by a small audience that takes many factors into account

Varying levels of sophistication, and diversity of interests, among audience members significantly increases the communications challenge

Rarely seek information, information must find them

1. Need to be convinced of the merits of an argument
2. Need to see those merits as compatible with other interests and factors
 - Give them tools to meet their needs
 - Create usable sound bites
 - Cultivate advocates and third-party validators
 - To degree possible, provide cover
 - Give them something to lean on
 - Don't just talk to them, talk to the audiences they talk to



EERE Audience Profiles

Journalists and Press

The critical element that links together all other audiences

But also a distinct and idiosyncratic audience of its own

1. Need to be convinced of an issue or story's importance and appeal
2. Often do help translating the story to their own constituencies – customers, editors, and publishers



Message Development

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Elements of Messaging

- Narrative
- Themes
- Message Points
- Guardrails

Principles Of Messaging

1. Talk about “me”

- Messaging is driven by the audience
- Effective communication requires the ability to see the issue from the perspective of the audience – take the time to do so
- Have to get a listener’s attention before they can be persuaded
- Easier to persuade audience with appeal than with a lecture



Principles Of Messaging

2. Movement takes time

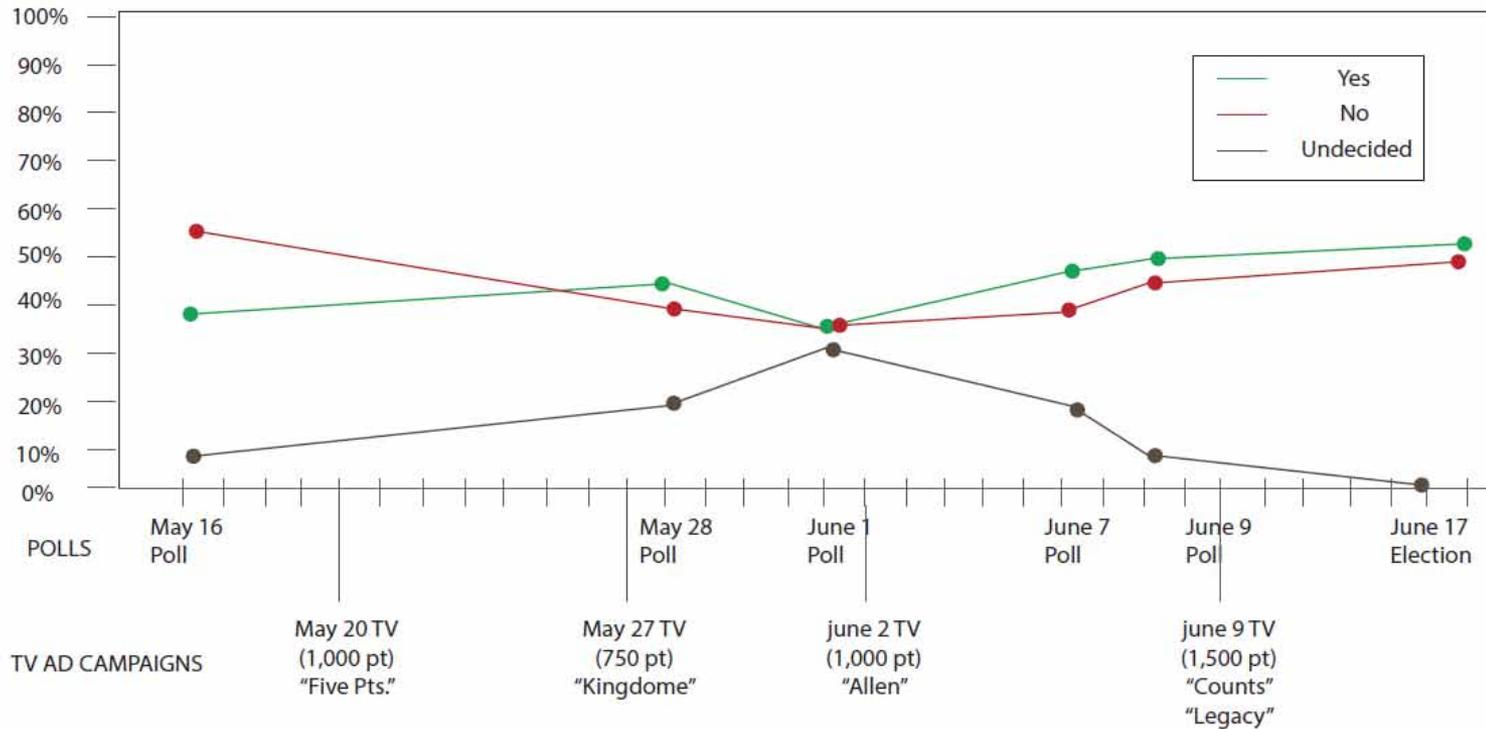
- You can't move people from 'no' to 'yes' without first getting them to 'undecided'
- When people feel attacked, they don't change their mind, they retrench
- Have to disarm concerns, and get audience to question their own position
- Most public affairs problems are solved sequentially – communicate in stages



Case Study

Seahawks Stadium

REFERENDUM 48
Major Campaign Events and Polling Results





Principles Of Messaging

3. Find common ground

- Message can't be separated from the messenger – brand and perception matter
- Find the intersection where the values of your audience overlap with your own

Case Study

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Weyerhaeuser





Principles Of Messaging

4. Maintain message discipline

- Change takes time and energy – use every opportunity to reinforce your message
- If communication isn't helping, it is hurting
 - Communication resources and audience attention are finite
 - Distracts from priorities, and dilutes core messaging
- Implement through planning and practice
 - Everyone should know:
 - » What is our message?
 - » What is our plan?
 - » Who is responsible for each piece?
 - » Who is in charge?
 - Avoid unnecessary communications
 - Every piece of communication edited and focused

EERE Messaging Recommendations

Examples from current BioComm Framing Statements

DRAFT BioComm Framing Statements and Stories

March 2015

Available/Affordable Working Group

Key Message: Biofuels are Affordable

Frame: Using cost analysis to focus research in feedstock development and conversion technologies, DOE is making biofuels affordable.

Stories:

- Design Report (NREL): [Process Design and Economics for the Conversion of Lignocellulosic Biomass to Hydrocarbons: Dilute-Acid and Enzymatic Deconstruction of Biomass to Sugars and Biological Conversion of Sugars to Hydrocarbons](#)
- Design Report (NREL): [Process Design and Economics for Biochemical Conversion of Lignocellulosic Biomass to Ethanol: Dilute-Acid Pretreatment and Enzymatic Hydrolysis of Corn Stover](#)
- Design Report (NREL): [Process Design and Economics for Conversion of Lignocellulosic Biomass to Ethanol: Thermochemical Pathway by Indirect Gasification and Mixed Alcohol Synthesis](#)

Peter McCollum

This is a message promoting biofuels – and they're present tense. If biofuels are already affordable, why should Congress fund more work?

Peter McCollum

Frames, or messages, should be used as support points for Themes.



EERE Messaging Recommendations

Recommended Narrative

EERE and national labs are helping to unlock the potential of renewable fuels

Current Themes

1. Biofuels are affordable
2. Biofuels are available
3. Biofuels are sustainable

Recommended Themes

1. Innovations by EERE and National Labs are making biofuels increasingly affordable
2. EERE and National Labs discoveries are increasing the availability and compatibility of biofuels
3. EERE and National Labs research continues to increase the sustainability of biofuels



EERE Messaging Recommendations

Examples from current BioComm Framing Statements

Current Message

Using cost analysis to focus research in feedstock development and conversion technologies, DOE is making biofuels affordable.

Recommended Message

EERE and National Labs are increasing biofuel supply through innovations in feedstock development and conversion technology



EERE Messaging Recommendations

Examples from current BioComm Framing Statements

Current Message

By improving feedstock logistics and optimizing preprocessing, DOE is making biofuels affordable.

Recommended Message

EERE and National Labs research is helping to streamline feedstock and preprocessing logistics to optimize biofuels production

Execution

Types of communication tools

- Direct – Content you control and deliver
 - Website
 - Speeches or testimony
 - Written statements or reports
 - Videos
 - Social Media
- Indirect – Content presented by others, but which you hope to influence
 - Press coverage
 - Word of mouth
 - Social Media



Tools: Press Materials

Press release best practices

- Quality over quantity
- Messaging is a means of standing out
- Importance of creating and providing quotes
 - Usability
 - Branding value
 - Guidelines for quotes:
 - » Brief – One or two sentences
 - » Direct – Avoid passive voice and unnecessary qualifying statements
 - » On message
- Press outreach
 - Pitch and follow-up
 - Relationship building

Tools: Summaries and Visuals

Fact sheets, one-pagers and infographics

- Attract eyes
- Simplify explanation
- Demonstrate ability to tell story visually



The Western Wind and Solar Integration Study Phase 2

An examination of how wind and solar power affect operations, costs, and emissions from fossil-fueled generators

The electric grid is a highly complex, interconnected machine. Changing one part of the grid can have consequences elsewhere. Adding variable renewable generation such as wind and solar power affects the operation of the other types of power plants, and adding high penetrations can induce cycling of fossil-fueled generators. Cycling leads to wear-and-tear costs and changes in emissions, but do those increases in costs and emissions from cycling negate the overall benefits of integrating renewables?

Phase 2 of the Western Wind and Solar Integration Study (WWSIS-2) was initiated to determine the wear-and-tear costs and emissions impacts of cycling and to simulate grid operations to investigate the detailed impacts of wind and solar power on the fossil-fueled fleet in the West. It was a follow-up to Phase 1 (WWSIS-1), released in May 2010, which examined the stability, benefits, and challenges of integrating high penetrations of wind and solar power into the Western grid. WWSIS-1 found it to be technically feasible if certain operational changes could be made, but it raised questions regarding the impact of cycling on wear-and-tear costs and emissions.

Purpose of the Study

Frequent cycling of fossil-fueled generators can cause thermal and pressure stresses. Over time, these can result in premature component failure and increased maintenance and repair. Starting

Five Hypothetical Scenarios

Five Hypothetical Scenarios	
No Renewables	0% wind, 0% solar
TEPCO	9.5% wind, 3.5% solar
High Wind	25% wind, 8% solar
High Solar	25% solar, 8% wind
High Mix	16.5% wind, 16.5% solar

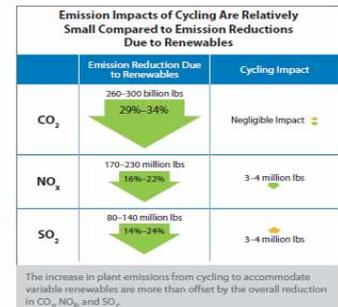
* Transmission Expansion Planning Policy Committee of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council

"The increase in plant emissions from cycling to accommodate wind and solar generation are more than offset by the overall reduction in CO₂, NO_x, and SO₂. Our analysis using real-world data shows that in high penetration scenarios net carbon emissions were reduced by approximately one-third." — Debra Lew, PhD

a generator or increasing its output can increase emissions compared to noncyclic operations. Further, operating a generator at part-load can affect emissions rates. Utilities are concerned that cycling impacts can significantly negate the benefits that wind and solar power bring to the system. To plan accordingly, power plant owners need to understand the magnitude of cycling impacts.

Key Findings

- The negative impact of cycling on overall plant emissions is relatively small. The increase in plant emissions from cycling to accommodate variable renewables are more than offset by the overall reduction in CO₂, NO_x, and SO₂. In the high wind and solar scenario, net carbon emissions were reduced by one third.



Tools: Social Media and Websites

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Public platforms

- Value: Free, direct, and under your control
 - Mechanism for outreach
 - Content distribution platform
- An amplifier for all other efforts
- Guidelines and best practices
 - Consistent voice
 - Steady flow of content
 - Share experience and practices
 - If possible, encourage public affairs to interact
 - » Respond when possible and appropriate
 - » Share to show interest or agreement



Tools: Video

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Dynamic medium

- Best practices
 - Length
 - Topic and tone
 - Production quality – take advantage of the characteristics of video
- Additional ideas
 - Stories about the people inside the Labs
 - Show how the work is applied
 - Talk about the research process



Other Tools

- Speeches and testimony
- Publicly available letters
- Executive summaries
 - Produce as a practice
 - Plain language
 - Emphasis on conclusions and implications
- EERE and lab newsletters

Other Tools

ENERGY.GOV
Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

SERVICES EFFICIENCY RENEWABLES TRANSPORTATION ABOUT US OFFICES

Home > Bioenergy News

BIOENERGY NEWS

December 14, 2015
NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) TO ISSUE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVANCEMENTS IN ALGAL BIOMASS YIELD, PHASE 2

The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) announces its intent to issue on behalf of the Bioenergy Technologies Office, a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) entitled "Advancements in Algal Biomass Yield, Phase 2 (ABY2)." [View more](#)

November 23, 2015
GREET MODEL EXPANDED TO BETTER ADDRESS BIOFUEL LIFE-CYCLE ANALYSIS RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Greenhouse gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy use in Transportation (GREET) model allows researchers and analysts to fully evaluate the energy and emission impacts of advanced vehicle technologies and new transportation fuels. Argonne National Laboratory recently released a new version of GREET, funded in part by the U.S. Department of Energy's Bioenergy Technologies Office. [View more](#)

YouTube

National Renewable Energy Laboratory - NREL

Home Videos Playlists Channels Discussion About

Uploads

- Homeowner's Guide to Window Air Conditioner Installation 41,779 views • 2 years ago
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BIOENERGY TECHNOLOGIES OFFICE

SUSTAINABILITY IN BIOENERGY: A NATION CONNECTED

Watch the Sustainability in Bioenergy short documentary film highlighting personal stories made by communities across the United States provide bioenergy, while ensuring it is environmentally and socially sustainable.

PROGRAM AREAS

Sandia National Labs @SandiaLabs

U.S. @Energy labs dedicated to securing a peaceful and free world through science and technology. Follows, RTs and mentions ≠ endorsements.

New Mexico and California
sandia.gov
Joined February 2009

589 Photos and videos

Sandia National Labs @SandiaLabs

Sandia/@UNM's Jeff Brinker among 168 innovators elected Fellows of @AcadofInventors bit.ly/1T23741 #STEM

UNM Newsroom, STC UNM, nufersalumni and 5 others



Adaptability

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Evaluate and improve

- No plan survives the first engagement
- Establish metrics and check them regularly
 - Are we hitting our benchmarks?
 - Have conditions changed?
 - Gather feedback from government relations contacts, influencers, friendly staffers, and colleagues about what they're hearing.
 - What is working, and what isn't?
- Evaluate progress, make adjustments, and keep moving forward



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