8 rules for enabling action

1) Spotlight a hero
Everyone wants to be a hero. Hero stories create optimism and prove that change is possible. They have how-to lessons that people readily learn from.

☐ Check: Are you telling a human story that causes curiosity, amazement or admiration? Is there a role model your actors can learn from? Can they dream “I wish I was that person?”

2) Choose an authentic voice
Communicate using voices who are real and trusted by the audience. No one trusts the disembodied voice of reason or authority anymore. Instead people want to hear the unfiltered, passionate voices of real people.

☐ Check: Have you allied yourself with leaders who are similar, passionate, respected, known, connected and powerless?

3) Shake people up (gently)
Unpredictability grabs people’s attention and shakes up their worlds, opening minds to new possibilities. Tell stories that surprise, break stereotypes and expectations. Use styles or media that are unexpected. But don’t shock - that does the opposite!

☐ Check: What is surprising about your story and the way you’re delivering in?

4) Focus on one do-able action
The starting point is knowing exactly what you want your actors to do. But don’t ask people to do several things - they’ll just be overwhelmed (and so would you). Settle on one action per campaign and throw all your resources at it.

☐ Check: have you chosen a single pivotal action to focus your resources on?

5) Depict exactly how it’s done
Show your actors how to do it. Remember that even simple actions seem onerous and scary to those who haven’t done them before. Familiarity is the key to reducing that fear.

☐ Check: Have you shown people exactly how to act, visually, with such clarity that a person could look at your communication and say “I could do that.”

6) Make it about community
Social connection enormously reduces people’s perceptions of risk. How can your effort bring people closer together?

☐ Check: Is it sociable? Will people meet enthusiastic companions or leaders? Will they feel part of a community?

7) Show that you care for your actors
Show you care for your actors’ wellbeing, happiness and dignity. Empathy and caring is 50% of credibility*. If you care for people, they’ll likely trust you.

☐ Check: Do your words and efforts demonstrate genuine concern for your actors’ hopes and frustrations? Do their lives get better in multiple ways?

* Covello V 1992, Risk Communication, Trust and Credibility
8) Have you listened enough?
Have you met your potential actors and listened to them? You’ll always be thankful for the insights you gain when you sit down and talk with real people.

Check: Have you listened to your intended actors for long enough to understand their personal frustrations and hopes? Have you listened long enough to have your own assumptions challenged?

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Stuff that works

Humour and quirkiness
A great way to lower resistance, even to confronting requests.

Social proof
Humans have “a sort of instinctual response to overvalue something when we see that others want it.” For example: “57% of Cardinia homes have rooftop solar.” “No one smokes here anymore.”

Urgency and scarcity
“Must register by 20 April.” “Just 20 positions available.”

Praise and recognition
Thank people for the good things they’ve done already and celebrate each step into their future.

Pleasure
People love games, puzzles, fun, and food. Oh yes, did I mention food?

Stuff that doesn’t work

Slogans and tag lines
They’re so lame.

Advertising
We all know they’re trying to persuade us. There are way better ways to spend your money.

Bad news
People don’t need more bad news - it’s depressing and disabling. It makes them turn away (i.e. denial). Offer hope instead.

Prizes and rewards
Really, if you have to bribe people then you’re not expecting them to care.

Thinking your audience are stupid or bad
You’re wrong and eventually they’ll figure out that you don’t respect them.

Forgetting to poof fred.

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Changeology practice guide

Arrange your info in layers
The headline and the image grab attention. Human faces convey emotion. The top layer of text connects to people’s passions and interests. The call to action and details follow. Make sure the source is credible.

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The Iceberg Theory of Communication
Good communication is more than a collection of words and images. It’s about conversations and relationships. What’s below the surface makes all the difference.

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Next dates:
MELBOURNE
8-9 April 2019
SYDNEY
1-2 May 2019