

Messages for 'yes'

How to create communications that drive action

8 rules to enable action

1) Choose an authentic voice

People want to hear the unfiltered, passionate voices of real people. No one trusts the disembodied voice of reason or authority anymore. Use voices who are real and trusted by the audience.

Do: promote the voices of grass-roots folks who are similar, passionate, respected, known, connected and powerless.

2) Be fun and positive

Everyone is attracted to good feelings. Share your love, pride, and sense of humour. Connect to your actors' sense of hopefulness.

Do: Be open to surprising and enjoyable language and images? And enjoy yourself - that will help!

3) Focus on a simple action

What exactly do you want your actors to do? Settle on a simple action and throw all your resources at it. Make sure it's within people's comfort zones. Don't ask people to do hard things, or several things - they'll be overwhelmed.

Do: choose a single, pivotal, do-able action to focus your efforts on.

4) Illustrate the action

Show your actors *how* to do that simple action. Remember that even simple actions seem onerous and scary to those who haven't done them before. Familiarity is the key to reducing fear.

Do: Illustrate how to act with such clarity that your actors could look at your communication and say "I could do that."



"Actors" vs "audiences" We prefer the "actors" instead of "audiences" because they are the ones who need to *act*. We recognise that their sense of agency is vital.

5) Make it about community

Make your effort feel like a movement or club. Let it bring people closer together. A sense of social connection enormously reduces people's perceptions of risk.

Do: Make your audience feel part of a community.

6) Show you care

Make it about your actors' wellbeing, happiness and dignity - not just remote results. Empathy and caring is 50% of credibility. If you care for people, they'll likely trust you back.

Do: Your words and efforts should demonstrate genuine concern for your actors' hopes and frustrations. Does acting make their lives better?

7) Spotlight a hero

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

Do: 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?"

Beware of reasons, facts



Beware of reasons, facts, lists of costs and benefits, and logic. When intended to persuade, reasons and arguments cause denial and resistance. They make you feel good but imply that your audience are bad. No one likes being made wrong and so people will push back to protect their dignity.

People who are likely to act on your message already know plenty of "whys". Adding more "whys" won't help.

If you notice you're arguing with people, seriously stop and do the things on this page instead.

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 hear from real people.

Do: Listen to your intended actors for long enough to understand their personal frustrations and hopes. Listen long enough to have your own assumptions challenged!

Arrange your info in layers

The headline and the image grab attention. Human faces convey emotion. The top layer of text should connect to people's passions and interests. The call to action and details follow. Make the source credible.



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.



- ← **A surprise:** the part that people notice
- ← **Content:** the part people read or hear (ideally a story)
- ← **Source credibility:** Do they trust the 'voice'?
- ← **Values:** Do your words demonstrate that you care about the actors and their hopes?

Stuff that works



Pleasure

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

Humour and quiriness

A great way to lower resistance, even in the face of confronting requests or directions.

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 and celebrate each step into their future.

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.

Prizes and rewards

If you're bribing people you're really saying "I don't think you care."

Thinking your audience are stupid or bad

You're wrong and eventually they'll find out.

Forgetting to poof fred.

Changeology training with Les

For details and booking:
www.enablingchange.com.au

Next dates: 3 and 4 May 2023