

Messages for 'yes'

Create communications that drive action and change

8 rules to enable action

1) 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.

- 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

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.

- Check:** Have you allied yourself with grass-roots folks who are similar, passionate, respected, known, connected and powerless?

3) Break expectations

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 achieves the opposite!

- Check:** What is surprising about your story or the way you're delivering it?

4) Focus on one do-able action

What exactly do you want your actors to do? Settle on a single 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.

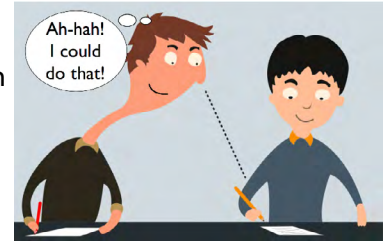
- Check:** have you chosen a single, pivotal, do-able action to focus your efforts on?

"Actors" vs "audiences" We use the word "actors" instead of "target audiences" because they are the ones who need to *act*.

5) Show them how *#1 idea here!*

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 fear.

- Check:** Have you shown people exactly how to act with such clarity that they could look at your communication and say "I could do that."



6) Make it about community

Social connection enormously reduces people's perception of risk. Will people feel part of a community or movement?

- Check:** Is it sociable? Will people meet enthusiastic companions or leaders? Will they feel not alone?

7) Show you care

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*

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 the speaker feel good but imply that our listeners are living wrongly. No one likes being made wrong and so people 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.

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?

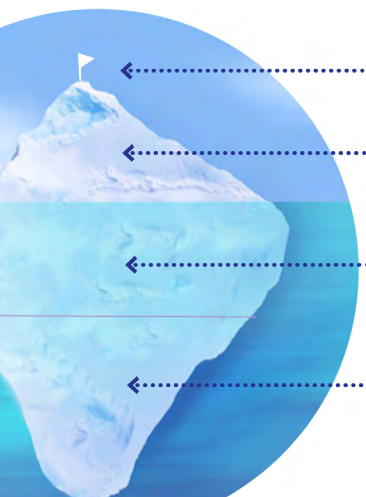
Arrange your info in layers

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?

Changeology training with Les

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

Next dates: 31 March and 1 April 2022

Stuff that works



Humour and quiriness

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 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.

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.

