Doodles, notes, and other scribbles here

Being more Strategic in Science Communication:
A Social Scientific Approach to Effective Public Engagement

Goals



Objectives



Tactics



Behaviors

Health choices

Environmental choices

Donatir

Votina

Career choice

Scientists' research approach

Acceptance

Willingness to trust/
Perceived credibility
Perceived legitimacy
Decision acceptance

Beliefs

Scientific facts/processes
Benevolence/goodwill/warmth
Integrity/Honesty
Fair voice/willingness to listen
Shared identity/shared values
Ability/competence/expertise
Risk/benefit/response-efficacy
Self-efficacy
Normative

Feelings (Surprise, anger, etc.)

Frames (Gain vs. loss, health vs. economic, etc.,

Communication Behaviors

Opportunity for dialogue/listening Event structure/setup/site choice

Message Content

Tone/Style/Intensity

Humorous/aggressive/etc.

Descriptive/narrative/etc.

Timing

Source

Expert/celebrity/etc.

Channel

Face-to-face, social media, etc.

Effective communication strategies begin with identifying actionable goals.

Actionable goals are *behaviors* or the *acceptance* of decisions (i.e. pseudo-behaviors) that lead to desired changes in the world. Here are some of the most common actionable science communication goals:

- Ensuring policymakers consider scientific evidence and/or turn to scientists for guidance when making decisions.
- 2. Ensuring people in the broader society consider scientific evidence and/or turn to scientists for guidance when making decisions.
- 3. Ensuring policymakers or people in the broader society *make* a specific decision.
- Ensuring young people consider scientific careers, including youth from diverse backgrounds.
- 5. Ensuring policymakers allocate robust funding for research.
- 6. Ensuring that the views of people in the broader society are considered in scientists' research decisions.

Evidence-based communication strategies draw on available social science about how communication works.

Communication objectives are the possible changes one can effect via communication. The list of 'BFFs' above draws from the integrative model of organizational trust, the integrated behavioral model/theory of planned behavior, the theory of discrete emotions, and others.

Effective communication strategies *prioritize* a discrete set of these 'BFFs' based on what one thinks are the most important levers of change for achieving one's goals.

In order to prioritize, it can be helpful to articulate what you already know or suspect about your target audience's existing beliefs, feelings, and frames.

Ideally, communicators also prioritize (a) learning about others BFF and (b) designing communication where they are able to examine their own BFFs. This is especially important when the goal is to change one's own behavior (i.e., goal #6)

There are an infinite array of tactics that creative communicators can choose to try to achieve their priority objectives.

It is key to remember that we communicate through more than just message content.

We can make choices about how we set up and implement communication activities, the tone and style of these activities, and when communication takes place.

We can also make choices about who communications—sometimes you may not be the best source—and the channels through which we communicate.

Two-way communication involves making choices that allow you to achieve objectives that enable you to update your BFFs and achieve goals related

Based on: Besley, J. C., & Dudo, A. (2022). Strategic Science Communication: A Guide to Setting the Right Objectives for More Effective Public Engagement. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Doodles, notes, and other scribbles here ... Goals Objectives Tactics Audience: Audience:

Use the boxes to describe your audience-specific goals, priority objectives, and objective-specific tactics.