

DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

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DISCLOSURE

I hold patents for dementia-related research, I receive honoraries for oral and written contributions from Actavis, Entrapharm, Janssen, Krka, Lundbeck, Novartis, Solvay and Zentiva, I collaborated in clinical studies sponsored by Glaxo and Janssen, I'm an *alumnus* of the Boehringer-Ingelheim Fonds and I serve as a referee for the Alzheimer Association, American Academy of Neurology and the Alzheimer's Research Trust.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- What is a message?
- Where does the message fit in your action plan?
- How to develop your message?
- How to communicate your message?

MESSAGE. WHAT IS IT?

Communication in writing, in speech or by signals¹.

Communication containing some information, news, advice, etc².

An object of communication³.

In communications science:

A thought or idea expressed in a language (SMS, etc.)

A brief, *value-based* statement, aimed at *a target audience* that captures a positive (negative) *concept*.

¹www.merriam-webster.com; ²dictionary.reference.com; ³en.wikipedia.org.

MESSAGE. WHAT IS IT NOT?

Message is not:

- a process
- an instruction

IT IS A CONCEPT! A GENERAL NOTION OR IDEA!

- an issue (issues back up messages)
- a fact (disease *vs* health)

HOW DOES A MESSAGE FIT INTO YOUR ACTION PLAN?

ISSUE – what is the problem?

OBJECTIVE – how the problem can be fixed?

REASON – why fixing this problem?

ACTIONS TO TAKE – step by step strategy to fix the problem.

MESSAGE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR ACTION PLAN

TARGET AUDIENCE – audience that will make the change happen

RESOURCES – what's needed to make the change happen

SUCCESS MEASURES – measurable components for benchmarking

TARGET DATE – what keeps your change happen in a timely manner

TARGET AUDIANCE

Look at each action (step) individually. Identify your target audience for each action (step).

- What audience/s will you need to speak to in order to accomplish your action (change)?
- Consider who needs to hear your message for your action to be successful i.e. key decision makers, legislators, public, etc.
- Tailor your message differently and in line with the values of each group you need to address.

DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

Key messages are the cornerstone to successful communication!

Messages need (must) to be:

- short, memorable and easy to understand
- the most important points of your action plan objective
- your essential talking points
- repeated as often as possible

OVERCOMMUNICATED WORLD

- Mind accepts preferably what matches previous knowledge and experience
- Once a mind is made up, its almost impossible to change it
- Average person will not tolerate being wrong
- “sensory overload” means that beyond a certain point, the brain goes blank and refuses to function

MARKETING YOUR MESSAGE

PRODUCT ERA: 1950s, marketing product

IMAGE ERA: 1960s, marketing company image/brand name

POSITIONING ERA: 1980s Al Ries & Jack Trout

influences perception in the minds of the target audience

aggregate perception the market has of a particular company, product or service in relation to their perception of the competitors in the same category

CONCEPT OF POSITIONING

core idea concept: describes company, product, service

positioning concept: sells benefits of the company, product, service
rational or emotional benefit of the buyer

position statement: articulation of the idea to the target audience to
develop creative beliefs

for (*target customer*) who (*statement of the need/opportunity*), the
(*product name*) is a (*product category*) that (*statement of the benefit*),
unlike (*primary competitive alternative*) our product (*statement of
primary differentiation*)

BUILDING MESSAGES ON VALUES

GENERAL	MEDICAL
Personal liberty	Quality healthcare
Honesty	Affordable health insurance
Hard work	Freedom to chose doctors
Integrity	Quality doctors
Fairness	Access to medication
Caring for oneself	Availability of new medications
Spirituality	Free medical education
Responsibility	Caregiver support

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE

Before you develop a successful message you need to:

1. Establish your action plan (all the steps)
2. Define your target audience
3. Calculate time needed to make your action plan happen.

In order to develop a successful message you need to:

- Research topic relevant to your action plan
- Identify all the key “sticky” words for your message
- Assign positive and negative connotations to the key words
- Put the key words into context

BE STRATEGIC WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

- choose your words well
do your research
- find words that make it sticky
focus on values, contrasting i.e. what is good, what is bad, use facts to back up your value
- be persuasive
be action oriented

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING YOUR MESSAGE

- BE SIMPLE: limit to 3 points, no technical, insider, media jargon!
- BE CLEAR: go to the point!
- BE CONCISE: less is more!
- CONTRAST: take position!

Effective messages are:

- Timely
- Relevant
- Newsworthy
- Memorable
- Consistent

BRIDGING TO MESSAGES

When off topic, use this technique to “bridge” back to your key message:

- What is important to remember
- Oh, that reminds me ...
- That is not my area of expertise, but X is ...
- Let me add...
- Before I forget
- Good point. You may also be interested to know...
- At this point, some additional background may be useful

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY YOUR MESSAGE

How is the message conveyed?

- Words
- Inflections/emotions (prosody)
- Body language

What makes the message “go through”?

- Meaning of the words 7%
- The way words are said 38%
- Facial/body expression 55%

KEY MESSAGES

1. What is (not) a message.
2. How does your message fit into your action plan.
3. Concept of positioning.
4. Developing your message i.e. strategy, suggestions, etc.
5. How to effectively communicate your message.