

F.R.A.M.E.S. MESSAGING

An Effective Message -- F.R.A.M.E.S. The Issue*

F.R.A.M.E.S. is a simple and memorable acronym for a checklist of qualities that help create and effective message. Messages are the bite-sized chunks of your narrative that will move through the world in public statements, campaign materials and media interviews. The best messages will embody the entire narrative and reinforce the framing that your group or campaign is presenting.

F= FRAME THE ISSUE

Does the message set the terms and define the stakes of the issue? Does it reinforce the vision and values that you are promoting? Framing means defining the problem, who will be broadly impacted and the solution. Don't communicate your tactics—what you are doing—but rather why you are doing it.

Let's explore Trump's message: Make America Great Again –

What was he projecting as a vision and value?

How did he define the problems?

Who would be impacted?

What's the solution? - left for interpretation, right?

R= REFRAME OPPONENT'S STORY & REINFORCE YOUR FRAME

Make sure your message is not just reiterating your opponent's frame. Reframing means changing the terms of debate on the issue. Does this message cast new characters, redefine the issue with different values, or expose a faulty assumption of your opponent?

Let's look at Hillary's Clinton's reframe: America's already great. We're stronger together?

Does this message cast new characters; redefine the issue with different values?

Does it expose a faulty assumption of her opponent?

(Later she dropped for the most part the Americas Already Great piece)

A = ACCESSIBLE TO THE AUDIENCE

Who is your message trying to persuade? Be as specific as possible about the audience and insure that the message is crafted in terms of language, context and values that will be appealing to them. Your message should always be factual although it may need to be tailored. Finding the right messengers to deliver the message can help make it credible.

Who was Hillary Clinton's audience that she was trying to reach?

M= MEME

The message has to be memorable, easy to spread and “sticky.” How can you encapsulate your message in a symbol or slogan or metaphor that captures the essence? Is there an existing meme that you can reference or remix such as a popular catch phrase or well-known idea?

Move away from the election here.

Toxic plastic’s campaign CHEJ used yellow ducky – represents home, baby, comfort, love -- positive feeling and emotions.

Rubber duckies once were safe – now made of poison plastic –I want a safe duckie. – Don’t duck the issues –

E= EMOTIONAL

People don’t swing into action because of a pie chart. An effective message should speak to people in terms of values, and deliver some emotional impact. Making your message as concrete and connected to real world impacts as possible can make it easier to surface the emotional content. Sometimes elevating the right illustrative detail can make it more resonant.

A comparison such as 10 times the amount, or that’s 1 every 12 seconds can help. Trigger emotional responses with themes like tragedy, hope, anger, frustration and don’t forget joy! Humor can really help a message spread as long as it doesn’t undermine the importance of the issue.

Over half our children were born with birth defects. Much more impacting than-- out of X number of births we had Y children born with birth defects significantly more than expected rate.

We have chemical X in our air and it’s toxic- it’s not naturally in our environment.

School children shouldn’t drink any lead in their water. Our school’s water has high levels of lead.

(To say: shouldn’t drink because lead was found above the safe level-- is a contradiction. No safe level. People will think they can get it down to a safe level.)

S= SIMPLE & SHORT

This doesn’t mean to dumb down your message. It means to get to the core essence of the issue. What is the most important point of the issue? What is it that makes it matter to your audience? As journalists say, “don’t bury the lead!” Likewise, a message has to be short. Paragraphs don’t spread well but phrases do. If you aren’t distilling your message, then inevitably someone else will.

Water Protectors at Standing Rock fighting the pipeline are clear and simple.

We are protecting our water.

They aren't talking about pipelines, oil, extractive industries. Clear, simple and everyone knows what they are about.

So let's spend a couple of minutes talking more about messaging.

Target Audiences

- Before developing your message frame, think about your audience. Who are you trying to move?

Public no

- What does your target audience think about the issue?
- What are your shared values? Children, health families,

What does it take for an idea to spread from one to many?

For a minority opinion to become the majority belief? ---- the answer is 10%.

Once 10% of a population is committed to an idea, it's inevitable that it will eventually become the prevailing opinion of the entire group.

Getting real live bodies together to act toward creating change is way less than that.

So the question is who are those 10% or less? Because that is who you need to frame your message around.

Message is like telling a story:

The story should have the following aspects:

- Highlight a conflict and make the choice plain and clear.
- Use sympathetic characters, such as the local farmer.
- Show what you mean by appealing to the values of your target audience.
- Offer your alternative vision.

Here is my favorite national focused campaign.

Children's Environment Exposure Research Study (CHEERS)

Cheers – EPA and the pesticides industry wanted to test household pesticides on families with small children.

They recruited from a free community health center.

Choose a low income African American population

Paid volunteers \$950 and gave them a camcorder to tape experiences – keep afterwards.

Americans don't conduct chemical experiments on pregnant women and infants.

Such a study, that uses babies as guinea pigs for pesticide testing, goes against every moral and ethical value we believe are sacred, and violates America's human rights policies.

Could have talked for pages about adverse effect on children, but didn't need to because we framed it in a way that fit within the core values of people. Targeting women, we received 80,000 signatures almost overnight and study was stopped. A new law was also passed within six months making it impossible to propose such as action in the future.

Local focused issue here one that worked as well:

Community was fighting the expansion of a hazardous waste landfill in a small community. For years they fought the permit, went to court but only stalled the process. In part because they were not able to reach enough people and get them to take action.

Their message was our water will be poisoned, our air unfit to breathe, our homes lose value and tons of stuff about the toxicity of the chemicals and associated health impacts.

CHEJ worked with the group to come up with a different frame and message.

Instead of all the negatives around the issue - they flip it to a more positive message.

Enough is Enough.

Their message was --- our community has already sacrificed for society by taking the XX amount of toxic wastes. **Enough is enough.** It's time for someone else to take care of the waste. Our community is healthy and thriving and we've done our fair share. . . we are done.

Positive message around value focused frames such as this one often works better.

Now I'll stop talking and take questions.

What do people think? How does your messages and frame compare to this conversation?

Getting Your Message Across Eight Steps to Designing a Winning Message

A key part of winning your campaign is communicating with messages that resonate with the public. Developing a message that reaches your audience doesn't happen by accident. It takes work.

Here are some steps you can take to get your message across:

- Frame Your Message to Reach a Broad Audience
- Use Key Words to Convey Values in Your Messages
- Develop Key Messages: Problem, Solution and Action
- Do Media Outreach and Publicity

1. Bringing Your Message to the People

Powerful and effective messaging is not born out of facts or figures. It is created by appealing to the core values of people.

- The Complicated Put Simply: Effective Messages Help Win Campaigns.

CHEJ stopped the Environmental Protection Agency from approving a proposal to have companies test pesticides on children and pregnant women. What was it that catalyzed this momentum? Simply put, it was an effective message:

“We Don’t Test Pesticides on Pregnant Women and Children.”

This message appealed to the most basic of human beliefs and it begs the response, “Well, of course we don’t.” It also clearly stated what we were fighting for. This resulted not only in halting the study but also in a federal bill (Sponsored by Barbara Boxer) that easily passed through Congress.

2. Frame Your Message

What is Message Framing?

- Framing is organizing your information to touch an emotional chord with your audience.
- People act based on emotions, not intellect.
- Good message framing helps you reach a broader audience.

3. Find Common Values that Make Your Message Memorable and Resonate with Your Audience

Some Common Frames:

Bad Apple: “A bad apple spoils the barrel.”

Justice: “The people have a right...”

Economic: “The costs are too high....”

4. Messages that Last

One of the oldest messages is “*Not In My Backyard*,” or NIMBY, created by polluting companies’ public relations firms. It marginalized the concerns of community groups fighting incinerators and toxic landfills.

The power of this message is that it has longevity, it says what it means and people can see themselves within it.

- An effective message frame conveys the essence of what you are fighting for.
- River Rescue of Peoria, Illinois, adopted the message, “Enough is Enough!” to successfully halt a proposal to triple the size of a toxic waste landfill.

It simply stated what the group stood for: no more pollution—we’ve taken our fair share.

5. A Few Message Framing Rules

- Values resonate.
- Keep it emotional, not intellectual.
- Keep it simple and short—fewer than 12 words.

It must be a short, declarative, believable statement that addresses your target audience.

6. Target Audiences

- Before developing your message frame, think about your audience.
- What does your target audience think about the issue?
- What are your shared values?

7. Craft a Winning Story

Messaging is much like story telling. Your story should be consistent, have a value and speak to a specific audience.

The story should have the following aspects:

- Highlight a conflict and make the choice plain and clear.
- Use sympathetic characters, such as the local farmer.
- Show what you mean by appealing to the values of your target audience.
- Offer your alternative vision.

8. Say it Again and Again

Consistent use of the same message is critical. It becomes the central theme for all of your outreach materials and activities. It should be repeated over and over through the life of the campaign.

Messages can be followed by 3 supporting points. For Example:

Enough is Enough!

No More Landfills in Libertyville

- Libertyville has a full toxic waste landfill that will be in our community for generations. We've already sacrificed our fair share.
- Landfill gases pose serious health threats.
- Traffic on congested Route 123 will increase by 40% if expansion is approved.

These 3 points appeal to the core values of people: livelihood, health and quality of life.

Visionary Vocabulary

Key Words Convey Values in Your Messages

- Use language that will connect with the largest number of people.
- Use simple, easy-to-understand language. No tech talk or insider jargon.
- Talk about your issues in a way that people can personally relate to by linking it to core values—family, health, safety and fairness.

Help your audience understand what is at stake for them.

Action Words

- Use hard-hitting action words that will grip your audience by the heart or hit them right in the gut.
- For example, instead of saying, "The factory runoff will negatively impact the surrounding residents," say "The toxic poison will harm hard-working people."
- Words such as compassion, fairness and justice connect with people's core values.

DON'T TRY TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING.

Condense your issue to 3 key messages:

- The Problem
- The Solution
- The Call to Action

Key Words to Convey Values

Activate	Fairness	Preserve
Advocate	Faith	Pride
Affirm	Family	Principle
American	Fighting	Progress
Assist	Forward	Promote
Balance	Harm	Protect
Bedrock	Health	Public
Benefit	Help	Relief
Bold	Heritage	Respect
Champion	Honor	Responsible
Change	Hope	Risk
Community	Hurt	Safeguard
Compassion	Imperil	Strengthen
Confirm	Injure	Support
Damage	Integrity	Sustain
Defend	Jeopardize	Threaten
Degrade	Justice	Tolerance
Democracy	Legacy	Tradition
Destroy	Mobilize	Trust
Dignity	Nation	Unity
Diversity	Neighborhood	Value
Endanger	Nourish	Working
Energize	Nurture	
Engage	People	
Equality	Power	

Now, let's try to craft a frame and message for your struggle/issue.

Remember to condense your issue to 3 key messages.

- **The Problem**

What is the problem you are working to address?

Forget all of the detailed information you have gathered. Look at the big picture. Create a message that *frames* the problem clearly and broadly.

Whoever frames the problem controls the terms of the debate. Communicate the scope of the problem and dramatize its impact.

- **The Solution**

While defining the problem is crucial, if you just stop there you will be in danger of sounding like a whiner. You need to present a solution. This is the "values" message.

In what kind of society do you want to live?

How do you want people to be treated?

Make sure to provide hope.

- **The Call to Action**

What do we need to do? This is the call-to-action message.

The action call may be different depending on your targeted audience. What you ask the governor to do in a leaflet may differ from what you ask radio ad listeners to do.

- **Practice delivering Messages parts 1, 2 and 3.**

They must move together: "The problem is X, but the solution is Y. That is why we are calling on the state to pass Z."

Media Events and Tactics

Good media tactics focus on the decision maker and build momentum for your campaign.

You need to be reactive, meaning that if something changes you need to respond to that change in decisions or plans by your opponent. But, too often groups are only reactive and thus have difficulty moving the effort forward.

At a group meeting you should take out a calendar that lists holidays. Think creatively about how to use these opportunities to create news and get your message out.

Mother's Day, Father's Day, Back To School, May Day, Anniversaries, Presidents Day (like Washington, tell the truth), Valentine's Day (have a heart) and so on. Plan proactive opportunities that can also be fun for members of your community.

Other ideas used by organizations include:

- Caroling: Holiday songs on your issue.
- Hands/Ribbons Around a Facility: Around government building, hold hands or ribbon with letters or photos of victims.
- People's Public Hearing: Hold hearing with a "judge" or community leaders panel and ask decision makers to answer questions.
- Poll: Announce results of door-to-door or phone poll on issue.
- Street Theater: Hold creative street theater skit.
- Toxic Tour: Hold tour of facility with caravan of cars for reporters.