

Strategic communications

Developing and communicating your message is at the centre of your campaign.

Are your communications an afterthought that are not given enough attention?

Are your messages engaging?

Are your messages pushing people the other way?

Are your messages appropriate for different audiences, or do they only speak to the people who are already convinced?

Think of your message as a story, or a narrative, being told in the media. What is the headline and who are the people telling the story and what are they saying.

This briefing is based on workshops given by Frank Sharry from America's Voice which campaigns on immigration reform in the USA. This work came out of research they did on why it so difficult to convince politicians and the public of the value of migrants and the need to respect their rights?

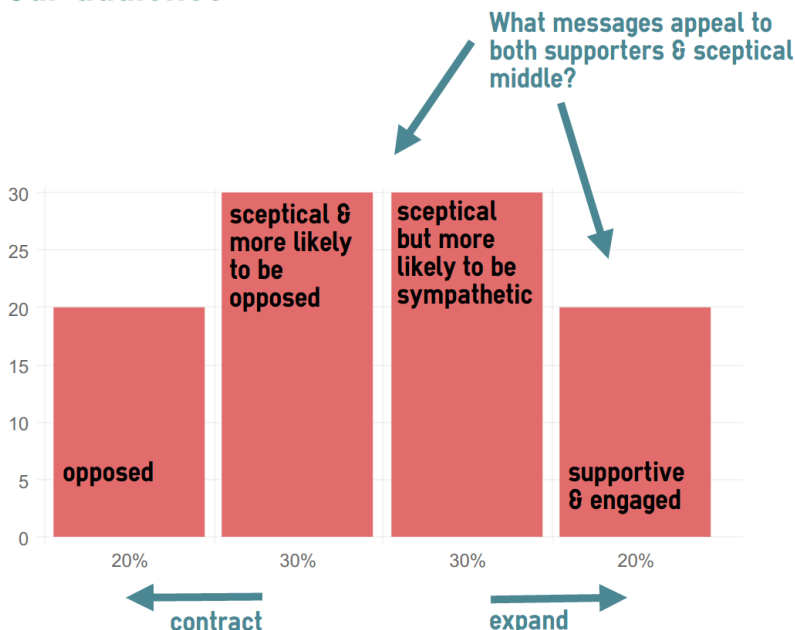
For a video of Frank Sharry talking about this, see:

www.civilsocietyhowto.org/creating-powerful-messages/

Communications overview



Our audience



Try and avoid speaking in a way that mobilises your supporters but alienates the sceptical middle.

A key challenge is to stretch ourselves to connect with other people's concerns and values while remaining true to our own.

Build a narrative house

Use the narrative house (or message house) as a method for refining a top-line message, how you talk about the issue, your solutions and the shared social values that underpin your solutions.

This exercise will help you and your group think creatively and in a focused way to develop strong messages.

- Work as a group to develop the narrative so everyone shares it.
- There is power in moving from a critique narrative to a solutions narrative.
- Use simple and accessible language that you can imagine your target audience using.
- Make sure that your top-line message translates easily into a tweet or facebook post or media headline.
- Think of strong phrases that resonate. Metaphor can be a powerful tool for communicating complex ideas.
- For each top-line message, define no more than three or four points for the frame, solutions and values. Keep the language simple and accessible.
- Practising the ideas out loud can help identify strong and weak points in the narrative.

