

Develop Strategic Messages

- Create an exciting message which engages community to meet a shared vision and shows new possibilities can help bring more people into your vision and goals.

River point: Current – clarifying out roles and responsibilities for coalition members and partners is important to pull any Lever.

Strengths & Skills that can pull lever:

- **Influencing & Motivating**

Decision-Making Power: Community

1. Think about who you are talking to - what do they think about this issue?¹

Level of Concern	Traits	Tips	How Can You Share Your Message To Resonate?
Alarmed or Concerned	<p>Alarmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convinced of the reality, danger, and human-caused nature of environmental harms. • Most interested in finding out what kind of actions can be taken to reduce it. • Pay a lot of attention to the news & closely follow news about politics, science, and technology. <p>Concerned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe the reality, danger, and human-caused environmental harms. • Want to know whether harms are happening, and how experts know harms are happening. • Interested in finding out what actions can be taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question most like answered: what solutions are both feasible and effective? • Emphasize that we are all in it together using “we” and “our”. • Provide actions they can do to make a difference. • Provide information about solutions that are both feasible and effective. • Motivate and support them so they know they are capable of making a positive impact. • Emphasize that their individual and collective actions and solutions can positively impact the problem. • Open to complex information, including science content. • Support “Alarmed” folks to be leaders – they set behavioral examples and 	

¹ From: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. (3/18/2014), “Message Strategies for Global Warming’s Six Americas.”

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		explicitly communicate about why change is a good idea.	
Cautious or Disengaged	<p>Cautious:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give very little thought to the topic. • If there's a problem, it's a problem for people in the future. • Pay almost no attention to the news. <p>Disengaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the issue the least amount of thought – tend to say “I don't know”. • Do not pay attention to the news. • More likely to watch entertainment programs. • Say it's hard to understand climate news. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question most like answered: what is happening (consequences), what are the causes, and how scientists know what is happening (evidence). • Use a lot of visuals, humor, and attractive materials. • Promote positive social norms to show that changes are popular, respected, and common. • Messages should emphasize that many desirable views and actions are widespread, growing in popularity, and expected from admired individuals. That is – change is popular and socially approved. • Show rather than tell what is happening. • Show impacts on places that are physically close or emotionally important. • Use storytelling. 	
Doubtful or Dismissive	<p>Doubtful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain that harm is occurring, but view it as a low risk or that it's not human-caused or that it can be solved. • Don't think about the issue on a daily basis but 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly individualistic - Emphasize “I” and “You” • Question most like answered: how scientists know that harm is real (causes & evidence). 	

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	<p>feel pretty certain in their views.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't follow environmental news but they do pay a lot of attention to news about politics, science, and technology. <p>Dismissive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly confident that harm is not happening. • Do not want more information to make up their mind – they have strongly held beliefs and attitudes. • Pay a lot of attention to the news. • Unlikely to trust scientists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct communication is likely to trigger counter-arguing. • Appreciate the underlying values and motivation behind expressions of skepticism. • Highlight their personal experience of the issue. 	
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2. Now – take your passion and understanding of your audience to write your message so that you are heard by the other person: ²

Name the problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly state your concern. • Explain how the problem is affecting people. • Keep it short & simple. • Focus on the part of the problem that your solution will address. 	
Say Why It Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used shared values to say why you care. 	
Emphasize the Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the focus on what change you want to see. • Name the person, group, or agency who can bring the change forward. • Name the specific action you want the decision-maker to make. 	

² Adapted from: http://www.bmsg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/bmsg_message_development_worksheet.pdf