

Articulating the Case for Change: Communications Toolkit

<p>1) Define Your Advocacy Goal. <i>What change do you want to see? This goal may be broad and take time to realize, but it should still be specific and measurable.</i></p>	
<p>2) Frame the Issue. <i>Answering the questions below will help you create and present a clear, consistent message. (Keep in mind, you may need to reframe the issue for opponents.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's wrong? • Why does it matter? (To help with this, write down what would happen if action is NOT taken? <i>What's at stake?</i>) • Why does it matter <i>now</i>? (create a sense of urgency) • What's the solution? (This will need to include a customized Call To Action by audience, below) 	
<p>3) Create Top-Level Messages/Talking Points. <i>Referring to your framing notes, craft 2-3 talking points that reflect the importance and justification for your change. Together, they provide a brief elevator-pitch that gets at the heart of why the change matters. They also can be reiterated throughout different types of communications. At this stage, write it with the "general public" in mind as the audience – you'll tailor it for your key audiences later. These talking points should make sense to those not as close to the change/issue as you (i.e. don't use insider jargon). Try reading it aloud to your partner/friend/ unassuming-person-at-the-coffee-shop and see if they understand it. If not, simplify!</i></p>	<p>It is important to remember/recognize/know that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • <p><i>Now, can you make them shorter? Less is more when it comes to message retention! Could you make each fit into a tweet?</i></p>

Your WHO (and their WHY) and HOW. Think about WHO you need to reach to realize change, in terms of primary targets (the change-makers) and secondary audiences (those who can influence the change and/or change-makers). You can brainstorm more, but ultimately – given limited resources – you’ll want to pick 3-4 target audiences who will be *the most influential* in your campaign for change.

Primary Targets Who needs to take action to <i>make</i> the change?	Current position Where they stand on your issue (likely support, neutral, likely oppose, oppose)	Their WHY Note their related values and priorities, what they care about or are guarded against	Tailored / Framed Message Address their “Why”. Consider: <i>What’s wrong? Why does it matter? What’s the solution? What action should I take?</i> May need to reframe for opponents.	Channels & Formats Where do they already get info? What formats or approaches will work?	Messengers Who is best-positioned to reach them?
<i>Ex: town board, task force, Pat Lawmaker</i>		<i>Ex: constituents, earned income, differentiating from opponent</i>		<i>Ex: monthly meetings, 1 on 1s with those seen as peers</i>	<i>Ex: Board member, major donor</i>
Secondary Audiences Who can influence the change-maker(s)?	Current position	Their WHY	Tailored / Framed Message	Channels & Formats	Messengers
<i>Ex: think-tanks, peers, scholars, donors, voters, members, parents, media</i>		<i>Ex: interest in the issue, newsworthiness</i>		<i>Ex: issue roundtables, social media, neighbors, newsletter, press conference</i>	<i>Ex: board member, Executive or Program Director, community leader, teachers</i>

TIP! Even when you’ve thought through your tailored messages, channels, and formats, it’s important to step back and ask yourself, “Is this the right time to communicate this to these targets/audiences? Are they ready for this conversation/these communications? Is the environment supportive?” There may be times when—even armed with a great plan—you hold some communications for political reasons.