Talking About Poverty & Economic Opportunity Today

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About Me

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The **Opportunity** Agenda

A Social Justice Communication Lab

Communications and Culture for Lasting Change
Today’s Agenda

• Introduction to The Opportunity Agenda: Our Approach
• Shifting the Narrative on Poverty: Three Core Pillars
• Messaging Guidelines
• VPSA Tool & Exercise
• Questions
Four Types of Communications

- Branding
- Campaign Communications
- Crisis Communications
- Long-Term Movement of Hearts & Minds
How Do We Move Hearts & Minds?
Discussion:

• What is a narrative?
What is a Narrative?

Story
Heroes & Villains
Familiar Themes/Values
Moral
Cultural DNA
What is a Narrative?

A Big Story, rooted in shared values and themes, that influences how people process information and make decisions.
Talking About Poverty & Economic Opportunity: Three Core Pillars
PILLAR 1: Connection

- Common Goals
- Policies Should Help All Communities Thrive
- Aim to Inspire
PILLAR 2: Solutions

- Power + Responsibility
- Abundance Frame
- Within Reach
PILLAR 3: Justice

- Systemic Injustice
- Policy + Structural Change
- Just Economic System Works for All
Narrative v. Message
Narrative v. Message
Narrative v. Message
Narrative v. Message
Goals & Audience
Talking About Poverty: Messaging Guidelines
#1 - Know Your Audience
The General Public
Audience Strategy

- Mobilize/Energize 1-2’s
- Neutralize the opposition’s effect
- ID Themes, messages and spokespeople to move 3’s and 4’s.
Discussion:

- Who are your persuadable audiences?
#2 – Lead with Values

- Strong start is crucial.
- Allow audiences to hear messages more effectively than dry facts or emotional rhetoric.
- Sometimes need defining.
Discussion:

- What are your shared values?
#3 – Tell a Systemic Story

Heart and sole: Detroiter walks 21 miles in work commute

Bill Laitner, Detroit Free Press  Published 11:10 p.m. ET Jan. 31, 2015 | Updated 11:05 a.m. ET Feb. 10, 2015

In this Jan. 29, 2015, photo, James Roberson, 36, of Detroit, walks toward Woodward Avenue in Detroit to catch his morning bus to Somerset Collection in Troy before walking to his job at Schin Mould Engineering in Rochester Hills. Getting to and from his factory job 21 miles away in Rochester Hills, he'll take a bus partway there and partway home and walk 21 miles according to the Detroit Free Press. Ryan Searce - AP

My Journey From 'Lazy Welfare Mother' To Successful Professional

LearnVest Former Contributor ○
Personal Finance
Former Contributor

15,056 views | Nov 1, 2012, 11:08am

Detroit Man Who Walked 21 Miles to Work Each Day to Finally Be Bought Car
#4 – Tell an Affirmative Story
#4 – Tell an Affirmative Story

- Homelessness is not a crime.
- Everyone should have a home.
#5 – Amply document unequal opportunity (not just unequal outcomes).
#6 – Avoid “new poor”/“old poor” false dichotomy.
#7 – Tell a nuanced story regarding the role of government.
Building a Message: VPSA

• **Value at Stake**
  Why should your audience care?

• **Problem**
  Hurts us all. Violates our values.

• **Solution**
  Avoid issue fatigue.
  Make sure the solution is systemic.

• **Action**
  What can they concretely do?
A way to organize your messaging thoughts...

The basis for a soundbite...

(Crib notes for an interview)

A Social Media Update

WHAT IS A VPSA?

A Letter to the editor

An Op-Ed

A Speech
VPSA: Values
VPSA: Problem

- Frame problems as a threat to values
- Systemic: It’s about all of us
- Use stats and facts carefully
VPSA: Solution

- Problem is solvable
- Connect to values
- Assign responsibility: Who needs to do what?
VPSA: Action

- A concrete action someone can picture themselves doing
VPSA EXERCISE
THANK YOU!

• Questions? Contact us.
• Access Our Communications Toolkit
• www.opportunityagenda.org
Your feedback is important to the Partnership.

We invite you to complete a brief evaluation of this session so we can continue to provide timely content.

*Please complete the evaluation on paper or in the Event App.*