

Developing communication strategies that work

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Some of the concepts presented are adapted from the following EPA publications:

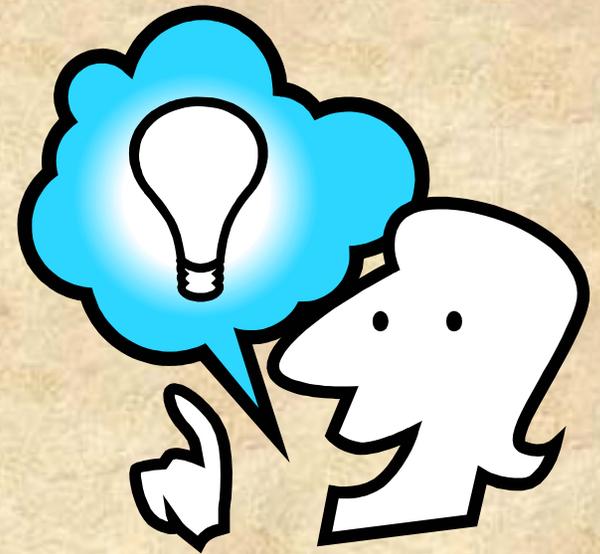
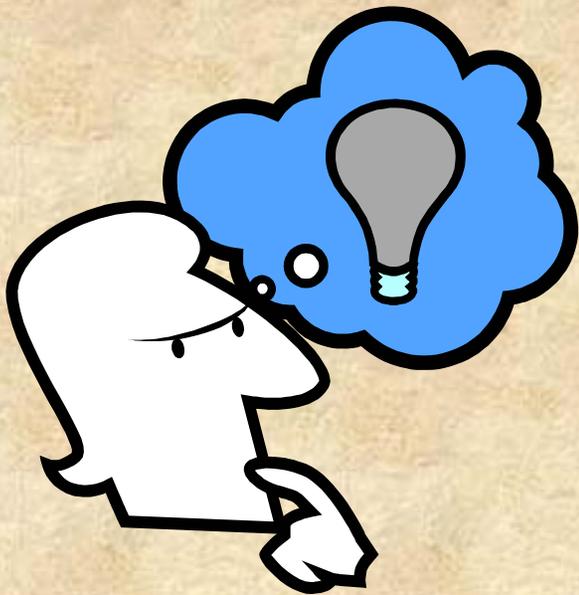
- *Community Culture and the Environment: A Guide to Understanding a Sense of Place*

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/water/owrccatalog.nsf/0/de5188f2a992865085256cc6006f084a?OpenDocument>

- *Getting In Step: A Guide to Effective Outreach in Your Watershed*

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/outreach/documents/>

*The ability to express an idea
is as important as the idea
itself.*



THESE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO TAKE HOME

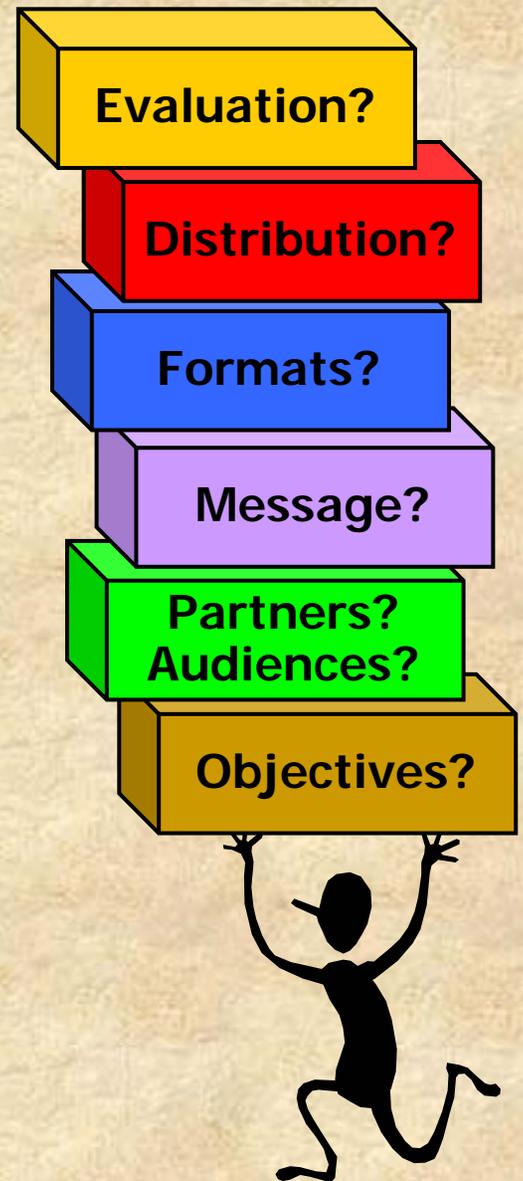
- ▣ Communication is more than “telling”... it is conveying information that you want people to USE and respond to
- ▣ The key to communication is answering the question...



**What's in it for me?
(WIFM)**

Strategic questions

- What are our *objectives*?
- Who are our targeted and *audiences and partners*?
- What is the overall *message* we want to convey?
- What *formats* are we going to use to convey the message?
- How will we *distribute* the message?
- How will we *evaluate* the success of the strategy(s)?



MOTIVE

OPPORTUNITY

Reason to get involved.

Message?

Partners?
Audiences?

Objectives?



Access to involvement

Evaluation?

Distribution?

Formats?

☐☐ Clearly articulated, results-oriented statements specifying what you want to achieve.

☐☐ Be able to ask and answer...

- Why are we doing this?
- What's in it for us?
- What do we want to accomplish?
- What will be different if we are successful?
- How will we measure success?



Our objective is to educate city park users about the importance of riparian stream buffers and to build community support for and participation in a "growing not mowing" program.

The Public

- ❑ not monolithic term
- ❑ endless ways to group and organize communities of people
- ❑ be as specific as possible about which groups of people you are trying to reach

urban park users



Stakeholders

- ☐ *People who are interested in, who are affected by, or who could possibly affect activities related to environmental protection, restoration, or other management efforts.*



People who live, work, and/or play in the watershed

Community

Partners?
Audiences?

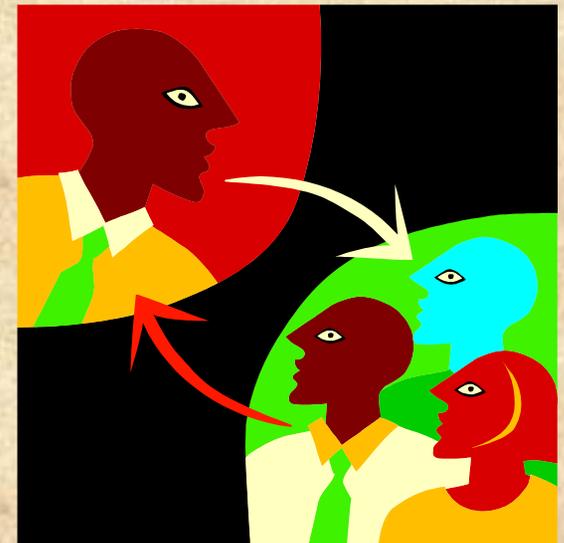


- A group of people with a common characteristic or interest who interact together within a larger society. Three broad categories of “community”
- **geographic** (such as watersheds, towns, cities, states, regions)
 - **issue-based** (such as environment, economic and community development, human rights, the arts, education, human development, religion);
 - **affinity-based** (such as racial/ethnic, religious, ideas and values, classmates, coworkers).



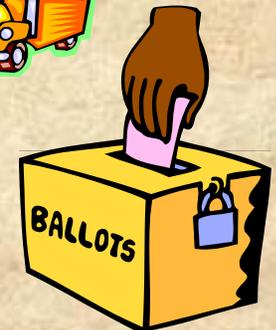
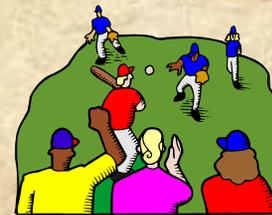
Identify communities and stakeholder groups—and specific individuals within them.

- Who are the leaders in the community?
- Who has the “ear” of the community?
- Who do we need to include in order to get input from all sides of the issue?
- How do people get information?
- Who will use the information or results?



Getting to know you...Community Characteristics

- Investigate the characteristics of a specific community
- The community characteristics you are most interested in will depend on the objectives of your strategy



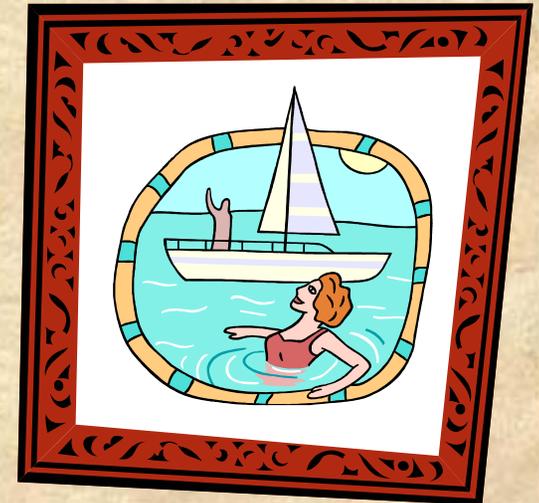
FRAME the message...community identity



Frame the overall message in the context of the community's identity and values



– focus on the relevant economic, cultural, and safety benefits as well as the environmental ones.



FRAME the message...WIFM

- Show a direct connection or benefit to the audience



What's in it for me?



The beginning of wisdom is a definition of terms (Socrates)



- ▣ Speak in the language of your audience OR make sure that you share your language with the audience
- ▣ For example, what does this phrase mean to different people...

Data Use

FRAME the message...problems & solutions

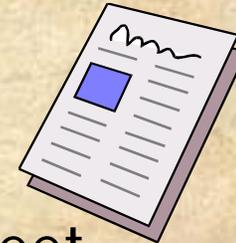
Message?

- Always discuss SOLUTIONS as well as problems.

- The message should always include at least one action people can take — preferably an individual as well as a collective action



What formats are we going to use to convey the message?



Objectives, targeted audiences, and message all contribute to how we communicate the information.

- What formats will best allow us to meet our objectives?
- What formats will best emphasize our message?
- What combination of formats can we use to reach the most people?

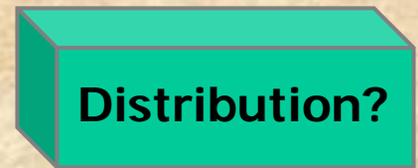




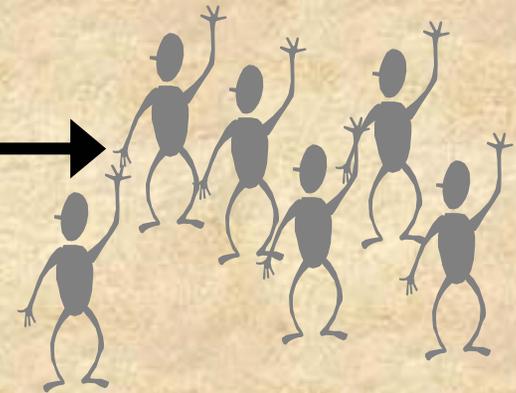
Every successful outreach strategy includes a distribution plan.

– How can we involve others in announcing and distributing the message?

– How can we make sure that all partners in the project have the means to spread the word?



Build a distribution system that allows people to hear the message and then communicate it to others.





How well did we do? Analyze each stage of the process and then use that to improve on future efforts.

- Did people understand what we were trying to convey?
- Did the message reach the targeted audiences?
- Did people take the message and convey it to others?
- Were there people who should have been involved and weren't? Were there audiences we missed?
- Would people choose other formats or distribution methods?

