

Fundamentals of Message Design & Message Discipline

WHAT NOW:

MESSAGE DISCIPLINE IS YOUR FRIEND - AND COULD HELP SAVE YOUR JOB

WITH MIKEL ELLCESSOR, CARLA SOREY-REED & CHRISTINA SHOCKLEY. HOSTED BY MIKE HENRY



paragon 

Message design & message discipline starts here

- What does the recipient need to know & why?
- EVERY communication has an audience and an objective.
- If you want your message to land, influence thinking, and drive behavior, you must be crystal clear about both.

Strategically...

Your message has to be designed in a way that ladders up to your larger brand and service story, it has to be relevant and accessible to the audience AND it MUST have a clear, compelling and time-based CTA.

The first step is establishing *a messaging objective*

There are many, but here 4 that are most relevant to the current situation:

1. Education - the default approach for public radio, "here are the facts we will use to make our case"
2. Persuasion - speak to an idea that is already in the receivers' mind, which helps to shape their thinking and drive them to our desired action
3. Amplification - the receivers identify with the message so strongly they want to share it as a way of showing "this is me, these are my values, I want you to know me this way"
4. Activation (organizing or mobilization) - these messages MUST have a Call To Action

Next, you want to go through a message targeting process

- Identify the target group(s) for your message(s)
- Segment the messages and assign them to the groups
- Prioritize their relevance to each of the groups
- Customize your messages to speak to their specific interests or needs

Likely groups for a public radio station include:

- Donors
- Total listening audience
- The wider community in the service area (whether they are listeners, or not)
- Business leaders who can apply leverage, or contribute influence
- Affiliated influentials like the Board, University trustees, local foundation leaders, etc...
- The media

Careful Message Design creates the proper setting for Message Discipline

All of your messages must address an audience need in

clear language *that's*

*both **relevant and resonant** for the audience and*

*is designed to **grab attention** and **cut through**.*

3 Ways to Test Your Messages

1. Are you trying to please everyone, and afraid of upsetting anyone?

People want to be inspired by someone who will stand up for their values, even if not everyone likes it.

2. Stories are more powerful than facts

Make it a STORY that matters to THEIR life, THEIR needs, and show how you are solving a problem FOR THEM

3. If you want to be both relevant and resonant for the audience, you must dig deep to be sure you are REALLY answering the question: "why should I care about this?"

Outside of the public media audiences, trust in news institutions is at an all-time low.

Politics and culture are intertwined, so "we're music-focused" is not a safe harbor.

Read The Room - Everything is being cut. Assume nothing about your relevance and value.

Message Discipline is the result of planning, practice, and execution

Message Delivery

- Clear language is easier to manage
- Cut the jargon
- How do you know if it's clear? Test it with people who know nothing and ask "where did I lose you, where did your attention wander?"
- Focus & trim it down because broken attention and a cluttered world is more powerful than your muddled message

Master Your Call To Action

- Does your message come with a request?
- Is it something that's easy for them to accomplish?
- How will acting on your behalf help them?
- Is it time sensitive?
- Have you practiced every possible way to deliver your CTA in every setting?

MESSAGE DISCIPLINE IS ACHIEVED THOUGH PRACTICE

- Internalizing > memorizing – you must achieve such a mastery over your talking points that they become invisible
- Being persuasive is about *what you do AND who you are* as an authentically available leader
- This is a craft that is enabled by deep skills: write it, edit it, practice it, get coached, go back, and do it all over again
- Make yourself coachable: it's public communication. Make yourself available to outside input in the service of mastering your message.

TAKEAWAYS

Write it down

Edit and refine it

Practice it

Get feedback

Master Your Ability to Be Authentically
Engaged With A Mastery of Your Message

There is no “winging it”

If it’s important, you will write it down and
practice it

A plan that isn’t written down is just a wish.

A message strategy that doesn’t follow
these steps is just talking to yourself and
your bubble

GET IN TOUCH!

Mikel Ellcessor: Messaging and coaching for audience and revenue maximization

mellcessor@gmail.com

Carla Sorey-Reed: Executive coaching and speaker training

carlasoreyreed@gmail.com

Christina Shockley: On-air fundraising consulting

Christina@TeamParagon.Consulting

Mike Henry: Paragon

Mike@TeamParagon.Consulting

LIVE

WHAT NOW:

**MESSAGE DISCIPLINE IS
YOUR FRIEND – AND COULD
HELP SAVE YOUR JOB**

**WITH MIKEL ELLCESSOR,
CARLA SOREY-REED
AND CHRISTINA SHOCKLEY
HOSTED BY MIKE HENRY**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION: