US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Overview:

Communicating with Purpose – Communicating for Change

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Are We Getting Through?

Photo: www.motherrr.com

Are We Making a Difference?

Said is not heard;

Heard is not understood;

Understood is not agreed;

Agreed is not implemented.

(unknown Dutch source)

Beyond "Getting the Right Message Out"

From one-way information delivery to dialogue.

From knowing to active engagement and behavior change.

Image from: *Environment* (2004), Making Climate Hot

Communicating – Really

To communicate –
(from the same Latin root as the word **communion**)

>> to impart, to share, to make common

"Communities are groups of people communicating…"

Bill McDonough

Photo: www.dydelray.com

Key Challenges & Needs

- **Key Issues**: Climate change, energy, sustainability
- **Making it real**: Tangible translation, connecting the abstract notion to everyday activities
- **Right messaging**: Developing and prioritizing effective, simple messages
- **Reaching the influentials**: Identifying and building champions
- **Being impactful**: Communicating to make a difference with a limited budget
- **Dealing with political backlash:** Trying to work in the shadow of Agenda 21, climate polarization

Connecting Talk to Walk

BEHAVIOR

COMMUNICATION

Source: Adapted from Webb (2008)

Engaging How? – Need to Set Clear Goals

Type of Engagement	Description with examples
Cognitive	Focus of engagement is internal, in one's mind • Thinking about climate change • Seeking information and learning/teaching about the issue • Grappling with the complexities of climate change (solutions)
Emotional	Focus of engagement is mostly internal, in one's psyche, but may be shared with others • Allowing emotional responses (e.g. fear, anxiety, concern, grief, anger, guilt, passion, disappointment, despair, empathy) to surface • Consciously or unconsciously coping with the emotional impacts of climate change
Behavioral	Focus of engagement is mostly on actions • Making periodic or permanent changes in energy consumption in one's home • Shifting travel and transportation-related behavior • Shifting food and eating habits • Reducing material consumption
Professional	Focus of engagement are climate-related decisions in one's business, work • Making periodic or permanent changes in energy consumption in one's work place • Developing and implementing strategic plans to guard against negative impacts of climate change (or policy) • Developing and implementing strategic plans to take advantage of business opportunities arising from climate change (or policy) (in mitigation and adaptation)
Social	Focus of engagement is with known others, peers, or a social reference group • Communicating with others. about climate change • Enacting solutions together with others, supporting each other • Making one's publicly visible behavior help shape new social norms

Engaging How? – Need to Set Clear Goals (cont.)

Type of Engagement	Description with examples
Moral/spiritual	Focus of engagement is driven by the transcendent • Being motivated to take action by one's belief system • Developing a sense of responsibility toward nature, others, the future • Finding solace in a moral/spiritual conception of the world • Prayer
Civic	Focus of engagement is primarily on the commons • Speaking out about climate change in public • Attending hearings or public meetings • Writing letters to the editor of a newspaper • Participating in protests
Political	Focus of engagement is on the political process • Voting for candidates representing one's climate-related position • Voting for local/state climate-related initiatives • Running for office to influence policies and decisions

It Starts and Ends with the Audience

- Where can you make the biggest difference?
- Therefore, who is/are your primary audience(s)?

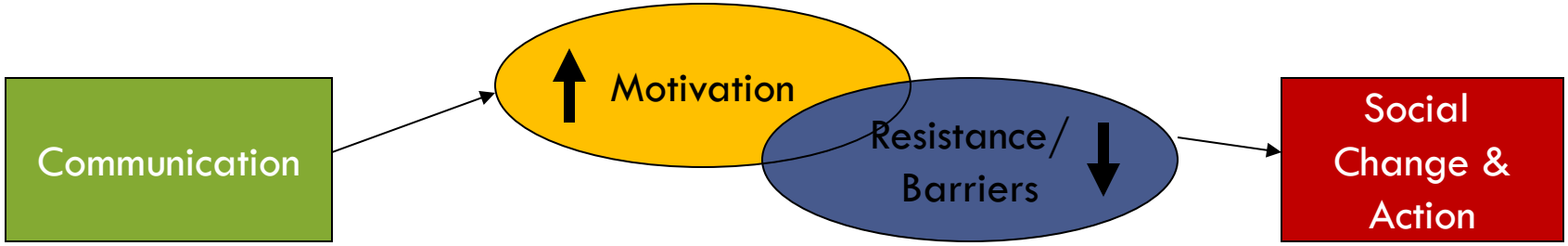
Effective Engagement

For communication to be effective, i.e., to facilitate an intended societal response or desired social change, it must accomplish two things:

(1) sufficiently *elevate and maintain the motivation* to change a practice or policy

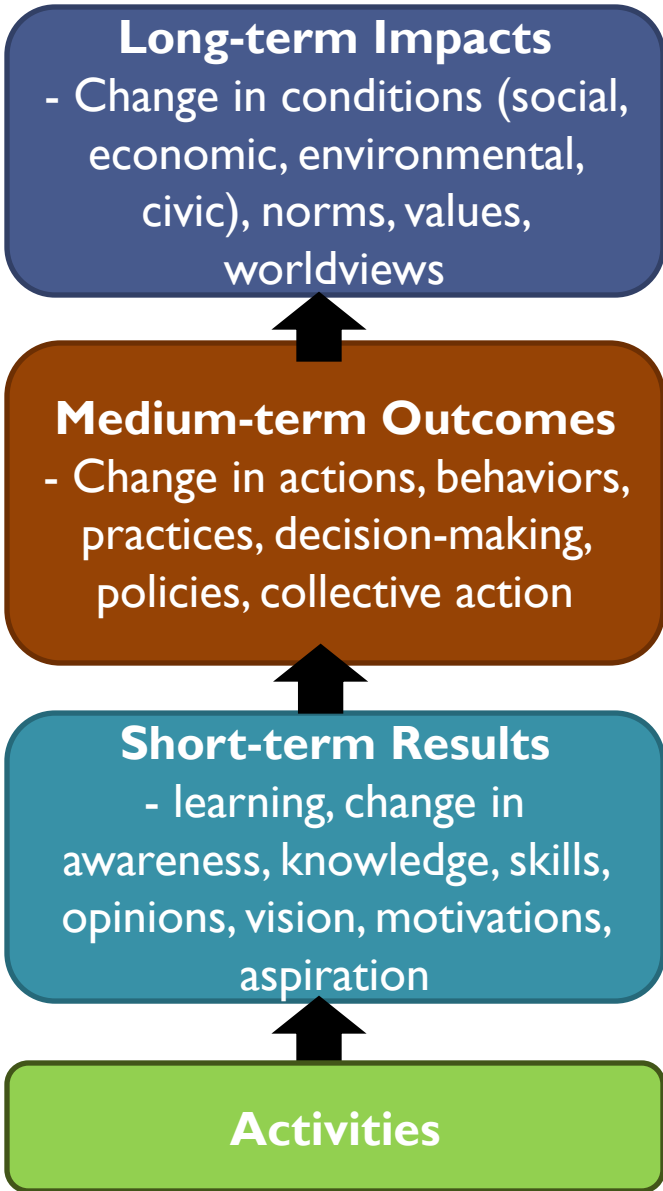
&

(2) *contribute to lowering barriers and resistance* to doing so



Spell Out & Test Your "Theory of Change"

- **What do we want to ultimately achieve?**
  - How will that look? How do we know?
- **What will have to happen before we get there?**
  - How will that look? How do we know?
- **What will have to happen before we get there?**
  - How will that look? How do we know?
- **What will we do to make that happen?**
  - What activities will we undertake, with whom? What could get in the way?
  - How much time will it take? Do we have that much time?
- **What resources and skills do we need?**
  - How can we get them?



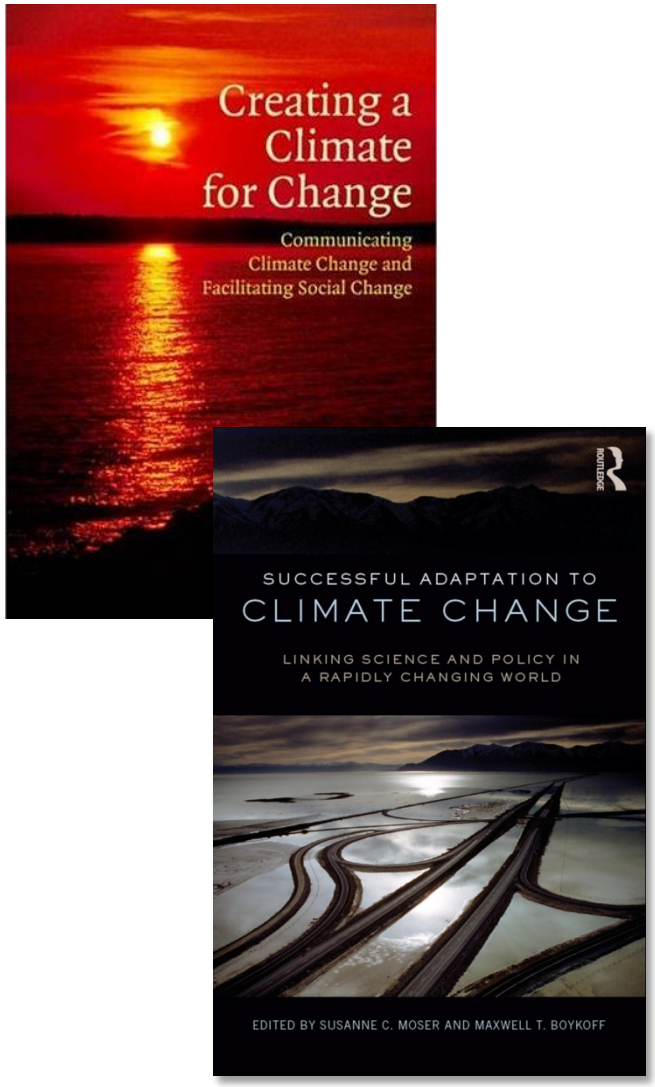
Drum roll, please….

Photo: www.lparchive.org

There is no trick!

(only diligent work and persistence)

Thank you!



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