

## CRAFTING EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

- 1.** Be clear about your communications *goals*: know what you are trying to accomplish and your time line. Be as specific as possible.
- 2.** Determine your *audience(s)*.
- 3.** Determine why should they care about your issue.
  - What are their *concerns* -- what about your issue is important to them?
  - What core *values* in your audience do these concerns speak to?
- 4.** Articulate your *message* in a short paragraph that answers these questions:
  - Why is this issue important for your audience? (Refer to the values and concerns.)
  - What is the threat and who is responsible?
  - What action will address the need and the threat? *Give people something to do.*
- 5.** Use *language* that speaks to your audience.
- 6.** Your choice of *messenger* depends on your message and your target audience. All three must complement each other.
- 7.** Be ready with *anecdotes*, i.e. real, human stories to illustrate and amplify your message.
- 8.** Use *images* to tell your story as well as words, but make sure your *facts* are handy.
- 9.** Distill the essence of your message into a *slogan*, a media “hook” or a soundbite that succinctly communicates your essential action.
- 10.** Determine how you will get this message to your target audience. What are the *points of access* to this particular audience -- mass media, community organizations, trade publications, church groups, special interest magazines, the web, etc.?

*Compiled from: Message Development Workshops for the Biodiversity Project, led by John Russonello of Belden & Russonello, Vince Breglio of R/S/M, and Scott Denman of Safe Energy Communication Council.*

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