

Communications Strategies and Ideas for the Healthy Washington Coalition

The Herndon Alliance

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Outline of the rest of the morning

- A few general strategies
 - The right words are not enough
 - $Q = A + 1$: tactics for controlling your message
- Integrating the Herndon Alliance research into the Healthy Washington Coalition agenda

The right words are not enough

- Not just about using words but connecting with deeply held values



The right words are not enough

- Changing the frame and messaging
- Narratives that connect with the American dream, being able to take care of our families and build a better future for our children.
- Personal, local stories forge the strongest connections

Words are not messages are not stories

- Words – Rising costs
- Messages to channel anger – Enough is enough. Our deductibles are rising and our benefits are being cut.

Words are not messages are not stories

- Stories – personal and local:

My neighbor works two jobs and her husband's a salesman. He was recently diagnosed with kidney cancer but his insurance won't cover his care. They've had to sell their house and move into a tiny studio apartment and are worried about going bankrupt. This is ridiculous. In America, we've got to be able to do better than this!



$$Q = A + 1$$

- A = Answer or address the question (briefly)
- + 1 = Then, move on to the topic that you want to address
- You're in control of the interview. Don't let the questioner take you off track.

A few tactics

- “I know that topics like that make for good headlines but what the voters really care about is...”
- “This isn’t about x, it’s about making sure that the voters of Washington get what they want, and what they want is...”
- “That’s a real concern for Washington voters and the Prescription privacy bill addresses it by x, y and z”

Integrating the Herndon Alliance research into Healthy Washington Coalition projects

- Some ideas and suggestions about how we might talk about the HWC agenda with voters, staffers and legislators.
- Goal is to connect with voters' shared values – the issues we know they care about so they can help us build a broad base of support.
- For 2008 and future health care reform

Prescription privacy bill

- Letting your doctor decide how to care for you, not the pharmaceutical companies
 - Voters have strong bonds with their personal doctor – help voters see this as a personal issue. Drug companies use prescription information to target our doctors and influence what drugs they use for your care.
 - Dtaming can be seen as too abstract for many people
 - Let your doctor decide what's best for you

Prescription privacy bill

- Channel anger – moves people to action.
- Anger at greed in the system.
- Anger at lack of control. People want control over a system they see driven by greed.
- Anger at rising costs.

Ideas for messages and stories

Fair insurance rates bill

- Helping to protect you and your families from skyrocketing health insurance costs.
- Channel anger at greed of insurance companies.
- Anger at denials of coverage, rising costs, lack of affordability and access.

Fair insurance rates bill

- Voters embrace a role for government as a watchdog, helping to create a fair playing field.
- Need to counteract cynicism and negativity around concepts like big government, government controlling which doctor you see. In this case, it's the insurance companies who are preventing you from seeing your doctor by denying you coverage or raising rates by 40% so that you can't even afford to see your doctor.
- We need to reframe this issue before the opposition uses it to confuse voters.

Ideas for messages and stories

Access to affordable health care bill

- Letting more people into purchasing pools to improve their buying power.
- Channel anger at rising costs
- Expanding public/private partnerships to help lower everyone's costs
- Provide more affordable options for individuals, small businesses and associations. (Many small business owners buy their coverage as individuals or through associations)

Access to affordable health care bill

- Everyone pays their fair share – addresses concerns about personal responsibility.
- Sliding scale for low wage employees– a fair way to make health care affordable for all.
- Small business voice is important – if addressing small business issues, it's important to have small business speak for themselves (multi-generational family businesses are ideal).

Ideas for messages and stories

The healthiest next generation

- It's passed – so now it's about implementation.
- Share success stories that illustrate how government can help address health care reform (gov't as watchdog, making health care more affordable, preventive care cost savings)
- Most voters around the country think all kids are covered. Not a powerful escalator issue.

Lack of access to personal doctors

- Voters agree that the system needs fixing.
- Channel anger at rising costs coupled with long wait times for appointments.
- Voters are concerned if we let more people into the system that scarcity issues will only increase.
- Backfire potential – we want to have solutions or proposals on this issue before raising it broadly with the public as it could have a backfire effect on our other reform discussions.
- When people are afraid, they retract.

Lack of access to personal doctors

- Scarcity is a real concern – how will plans to improve this issue address the personal, day to day worries of voters without raising fears and making them retreat?
- Remember that voters respond to health care issues first as consumers who are concerned about rising costs, who will pay, what will I lose, will I get less and pay more taxes?

Communications Strategy Map

- Communications planning tool designed to help coordinate messaging.
- Can be helpful to keep groups on target and on message.
- Public audiences will likely be at earlier steps in the conversation than staffers or legislators.

Users' Key to the Herndon Alliance Communications Strategy Map

Developed by [Beyond the Divide.com](http://BeyondtheDivide.com)

About this planning tool

Many of our partners asked us to gather the best practices and ideas from health advocacy organizations around the country and create a communications strategy tool that would help them use the Herndon values based research and messaging throughout their communication materials and campaigns. Some partners have asked us to help them create customized communications and messaging while others wanted a more general approach. This tool represents a general approach - demonstrating how an organization can create an ongoing dialogue with their members and the general public, over time, to broaden the base for health care reform. The key that follows takes you step by step through the communications strategy map on the second tab of this file.

Steps in the Conversation

This section outlines what we've learned from our partners and our research about how the public thinks about health care reform and uses this information to create an outline of the dialogue we can have with our base AND potential supporters. By focusing our messaging and communications across the entire spectrum of the dialogue - all the way from unaware to actively recruiting others to join the fight - we can make sure our messages are connecting with people's beliefs and values at the right time and asking them for the right level of involvement.

For Internal Audiences and Members

This area suggests options organizations might use when communicating and working with their internal constituency. This can include staff and lead volunteers who haven't yet learned about values based messaging, as well as members and close constituents. Because these groups already have a relationship with the organization (and hopefully view the organization as a trusted partner), we can ask them a bit more than the general public.

Messaging approach

This color is a reminder to keep all messages in these steps barrier free and focused on shared values only

By outlining general messaging approaches (not specific words), we hope to help you focus your messaging strategy in ways that match the step in the conversation and your audience's current state of mind. As you read from left to right, you'll see that the messaging starts at connecting with our audiences' shared values first. This helps them see you understand their concerns and connect with their beliefs. Later on, as their engagement with the issue deepens, we can begin to reframe known barriers. **But reframing barriers only begins when they are actively engaged in the conversation.** Otherwise, we risk shutting them down and losing the war before the battle even begins.

These messages are **CUMULATIVE**, meaning that we should continue to reinforce shared values and channel anger throughout our conversation. Even as we begin to reframe known barrier issues, we want to remind people that we understand their concerns and share their values. We want to activate anger as it is motivating rather than initiating fear which causes people to shut down.

Action(s)

These are simple actions that organizations can tie into their messages to help their audience become more actively engaged in the health care reform movement. At the beginning of the conversation, the actions are simple and require little time or investment. As people show they are interested in the issue and build trust with the organization asking them, we can encourage deeper involvement.

For the General Public

This section is very similar to the messaging approaches and actions for internal audiences. However, because we do not yet have a relationship with these audiences, our early messages should heavily stress shared values and the actions should be very easy and simple. We should keep in mind that in these communications we are not targeting the health justice base but the majority of the public or "moderates" who have the potential to become active supporters of major health care reform.

Communication Timeline

This section assumes we are working toward some kind of action - a public vote, a legislative action etc. The timeline provides a rough outline of when we might want to begin certain messages and communication options in order to have enough time to build a broad base of support when our action is needed. The good news is if we are all working towards a national health care reform agenda for 2009, we are perfectly positioned to expand our base of support.

Communication Options

This is not an exhaustive list but just some general ideas for how we might best use our voice at various stages in the conversation. Options that are low cost are highlighted. Organizations frequently use this section to review their current communication tools to see what messages and pieces are on target and what pieces can be rewritten or re-purposed for other places in the conversation.

Items highlighted in this color are no or low cost options that any size organization can do

Measurements of Success

It's critical that we include measurements of success for any of our actions so that we can track which communications are working and which are not. Simple actions that can demonstrate a "yes/no" response are the best. We can then measure the growth of our base AND their growing engagement in the movement and share our best tactics and strategies with others.

How Herndon can help

As with the communications options, this list is not exhaustive but it outlines some ways Herndon could offer assistance to you and your staff.

How to use this tool

We've found that one of the best ways to use this tool is to look at the materials and communications you are currently using and think about how they fit into the Steps in the Conversation. Is a brochure aimed at people in the "Aware but don't care" category or the "Feeling Frustrated" group? If so, is it on target and on message? Are we asking them for actions that are appropriate for their level of interest and engagement in the dialogue? Most importantly, are we connecting with them about shared values and only discussing barrier issues when they are actively engaged in the dialogue?

Please contact us for more information

Several organizations have asked us to present this planning tool by conference call or in person to their communications team so that everyone is on the same page and can learn how to keep their messages and communications materials on target and connecting with a broader base of support (while keeping current members and the base engaged). We'd be more than happy to help you customize a presentation for your team so feel free to give us a call or email. We're here to help!

Contact Sherry sherry@herndonalliance.org or Bob docbob@herndonalliance.org or call us 206.744.9192

Herndon Alliance Communications Strategy Map

Developed by Beyond the Divide.com

| Steps in the Conversation | Unaware | Aware but don't care (enough) | Feeling frustrated | What can I do? | What can others do? |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| | Don't see it as an important issue in their lives | Not their top issue | One of their top issues but unsure what they (or anyone else) can do | Just waiting to be asked the right task | Support them in recruiting others to help |
| For Internal Audiences and Members | Shared values only and barrier free | Shared values only and barrier free | Shared values and soft reframing of barriers | Shared values and active reframing of barriers | Shared values and active reframing of barriers |
| Messaging approach | Channel anger: rising costs, denied claims, address personal security. Direct anger at who profits from broken system to set stage for public/private solution Shared values: high quality choices, taking care of your family, control, the American Dream, preventive care | Channel anger & inspire hope: continue connecting with shared values and channeling anger at rising costs and inspire hope through referencing American ingenuity and innovation | Offer ways to fix the system (highlight principles tied to shared values or addressing fears) Intro concept of business and government solving this issue together (very soft intro of major barrier) | Call to specific action. BEGIN ACTIVE REFRAMING government role - how gov can help to create a fair playing field, help to guarantee access and control costs | Ask them to find other supporters |
| Action(s) | Learn more at website | Attend a presentation, rally or event | Sign a petition, email a friend, sign up for activist network, volunteer after a rally, link to the site | As needed (blog, submit personal stories for web, letter to editor, invite a friend to presentation or rally, hand out flyers, call a legislator, ask a question at a candidate forum) | Ask others to join the movement |
| For the General Public | Shared values only and barrier free | Shared values only and barrier free | Shared values and soft reframing of barriers | Shared values and active reframing of barriers | Shared values and active reframing of barriers |
| Messaging approach | Channel anger: rising costs, denied claims. Direct anger at who profits from broken system to set stage for public/private solution Shared values: high quality choices, taking care of your family, control, the American Dream, preventive care | Channel anger & inspire hope: continue connecting with shared values and channeling anger at rising costs. Inspire hope through referencing American ingenuity and innovation | Offer ways to fix the system (highlight principles tied to shared values or addressing fears) Intro concept of business and government solving this issue together | Call to specific action. BEGIN ACTIVE REFRAMING government role - how gov can help to create a fair playing field, help to guarantee access | Ask them to find other supporters |
| Action(s) | Learn more at website | View more than home page; attend a campaign or info event | View more than home page, follow a legislative or public oriented Take Action | As needed (letter to editor, invite a friend to presentation or rally, hand out flyers, call a legislator, ask a question at a candidate forum) | Ask others to learn more, share their personal stories on the web |
| Communication Timeline | long term - set up 6 - 12 mos | mid term - prep for next step 6 - 9 mos | mid term - prep for next step 3 - 6 mos | near term, related to needs 0 - 3 mos | ongoing ongoing |

| Steps in the Conversation | Unaware | Aware but don't care (enough) | Feeling frustrated | What can I do? | What can others do? |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Don't see it as an important issue in their lives | Not their top issue | One of their top issues but unsure what they (or anyone else) can do | Just waiting to be asked the right task | Support them in recruiting others to help |

| Communication Options | Presentations: Town Hall (What Americans Want in Health Care Reform) - offer this to member groups, service orgs and religious and civic groups | Presentations: Values Based Research, Issue Engagement, Media and Legislative Briefings | Presentations and Rallies: Coalition Building, Media and Legislative Briefings, Public Rallies | Presentations and Rallies: Overcoming Barriers, Values Based Solutions and Narratives, Public Rallies | Presentations: Media Skills and Opposition Response Training |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| | Web: Highlight shared values | Web: Highlight internal web info or Herndon health values survey | Web: Internet activism opportunities | Web and Phone: Internet and phone activism linked to campaign plan | Web: downloadable Town Hall presentations for activists to present on their own, email your friends packages |
| | Talking points for staff and volunteers | Guerilla Flyers, Posters | Talking points for media | Talking Points: Opposition response and overcoming barriers' | |
| | Op Eds - Shared values and enough is enough | Op Eds - Shared values and channel anger | Op Eds and 'Letters to editor - pre-emptive messaging, "soft" reframing (staff) | Op Eds Letters to editor - both preemptive and in response to attacks, active reframing (staff and volunteers) | |
| | Ads (America is sick) | Ads (American is Sick and We can do better) and PSA's | DM - print, email, flyers | DM - print, email, flyers | |
| | Ad notes: not just for People magazine - think member pubs, blogs, local pubs, lifestyle selects in regional and nat'l pubs | | | | |
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| Steps in the Conversation | Unaware | Aware but don't care (enough) | Feeling frustrated | What can I do? | What can others do? |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Don't see it as an important issue in their lives | Not their top issue | One of their top issues but unsure what they (or anyone else) can do | Just waiting to be asked the right task | Support them in recruiting others to help |

| Measurements of Success | Website hits | Attend presentation | Reply cards | Postcards to legislators | Email to friends |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Time spent per page | New website visitors | Website traffic | Email to legislators | # of referred website hits |
| | New website visitors | Internet survey participation | Internet activism: legislative actions, sign on to principles | Postive outcome phone calls | # of referred poll participants |
| | | Website usage stats | Emails to friends | Letters published | # of referred internet activists |

| How Herndon can help | Presentations: Town Hall | Presentations: Values Based Research, Issue Engagement, Media and Legislative Briefings | Presentations: Coalition Building, Media and Legislative Briefings | Presentations: Overcoming Barriers, Values Based Solutions and Narratives | Presentations: Media Skills and Opposition Response Training |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | Herndon website | Herndon website survey | Blogs and survey | Send a friend the survey | Follow up group presentations with health values survey |
| | Talking points and Op Eds | Talking points and Op Eds | Talking points and Op Eds | Opposition response and barriers reframing materials | Consulting services incl. communications material creation, review and editing |
| | Sample ads for customization | Sample PSA's | Sample DM | Sample emails, letters | Consulting services incl. communications material creation, review and editing |

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|---------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Some key reminders | On Messaging Approach: these approaches are cumulative - as you move from left to right, you should continue to reinforce messaging from previous stages while introducing additional concepts. NO BARRIERS until they are ready to act. We do not want to shut down their motivation with barriers. | Localize through personal stories: As much as possible, share stories of local people that exemplify the shared values and shared anger. Whether working on a state or national campaign, the audience needs to see how reform will help their families and their neighbors. | Report back to them on how their actions helped: If you asked your audience to do something, let them know what happened because of their involvement - report back on successes and let them know how they can continue to make a difference in their community | On Supporting Activists: If they are recruited for a health issue, let them have some time and success with health activities before recruiting them for broader activism. | On Supporting Recruiters: regular email feedback on how they're contributing to collective growth, e.g. you helped us recruit 10,000 new volunteers this month. Occasional thank you calls - for these calls just thank you, no additional solicitation |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|

Questions and comments

- What did you find helpful?
- What do you think would most help other coalition members?
- What can we do to help you further?

Thanks for your time and interest

- Follow up resources:
 - Sherry Prowda, The Herndon Alliance
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