



Putting it all into Practice

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Some goals for our time today

- A proactive, unified approach (stop playing defense)
- Some concrete messages that we can begin to use in our every day work
- Everything we do should connect back to creating a more unified and cohesive messaging strategy across the state
- Our best weapon is a values based, proactive message – one that counters the holes in the governor’s plan or the recent cuts to the health care budget before the issues even come up.
- Proactive, unified messages will help us:
 - Educate and unite the public around values they care about in health care – these values transcend demographics and are true throughout Florida (yes, even in Miami)
 - Inoculate against opposition attacks
 - Counter current problems (like the recent cuts to the state health care budget or the holes in the governor’s health care proposal)
 - Leverage our communications budgets. If we all emphasize key values, Floridians will hear this message in multiple ways, many, many times.

How we'll get there

- **Words:** We'll start from some basic assumptions and findings around word choice and discuss how we can integrate these in our communications.
- **Stories:** We'll talk about the importance of stories that express values that are important to voters
- **Narratives:** Looking at some national ads, we'll talk about the big picture narratives that our stories should be building towards.
- **Communications Strategy:** Working together, we'll identify where our audiences are at (both internal and external audiences) and create talking points that speak directly to their current realities.
- **Communications materials:** the work we do today should help you as you are creating or revising any of your communications materials including:
 - Talking points
 - Op Eds
 - Legislative briefings
 - Direct Mail
 - Speaking engagements and rallies

Getting started

- Why should someone care about health care reform in Florida?
- Jot down 2 or 3 sentences you would say to a neighbor, colleague or voter on the street.
- You don't need to share these, but please save these; we'll come back to them later.

Some words we use – and how voters respond to them

Positive Perceptions	Negative Perceptions
Quality affordable health care	Universal coverage
American health care	A system like Social Security; Canadian Style Health Care
Sliding scale	Free
Prevention	Wellness
Smart investments; investing in the future	Inexpensive
Choice and Control	Competition
Rules; public	Regulations; government

Positive Perceptions	Negative Perceptions
Guaranteed	Required
Giving people control; peace of mind	Government health care for all
Standard package; affordable health plans	Basic health care
A choice of public and private plans	Medicare for All
Government enforcement/watchdog Personal and shared responsibility	Government health care; public health care

Group discussion of words to use

- What words do you hear being used?
- After hearing about the negative perceptions some words carry, are there words you still want to use? How will you counter the negative perceptions?
- How might you use some of the terms with positive perceptions?

The right words are not enough

Not just about using words but connecting with deeply held values



We need stories that connect with a larger narrative

- Changing the frame using a shared point of view and shared values.
- Stories that connect with the American dream, being able to take care of our families and build a better future for our children.
- How health care is a key economic issue that determines whether we can take part in the American Dream.
- Personal, local stories forge the strongest connections

Words are just tools to create messages that connect

- Words – Rising costs
- Messages to channel anger – Enough is enough. Our deductibles are rising and our benefits are being cut. With the economy the way it is, some of us have to choose between paying for health care or paying our electric bills.

Stories have power

My neighbor works two jobs and her husband's a salesman. He was diagnosed with kidney cancer but his insurance won't cover his care. With money so tight for everyone these days, they've had to sell their house and now rent a tiny apartment and are counting every penny. This is ridiculous. In America, we can do better than this!

Narrative alert – this ties into the American Dream (having your own house), also ties into channeling anger at every day issues– if you work hard and pay taxes, you should be able to afford decent health care.



Story ideas

- Local stories with real people (your neighbors).
- Respond to editorials with stories of real people in Florida, use stories to illustrate benefits of proposals and policies (make the story memorable and easy to pass along; not heavy on the policy details - people can find details at your website).
- Check out websites for story ideas (for example American Cancer Society or AARP).
- Remember to **channel anger** and **provide hope**. Not just scary stories and judgment on a broken system without hope or solutions.
- Stories should be about everyday, around the kitchen table, checkbook, paying the bills situations

Some before and after examples

- We don't have to agree with all of the content of these ads and examples.
- Can be helpful to see how messages changed in order to make stronger connection with people's values.
- More connecting – less proving how “right” they are
- Think about the values that are being expressed in these examples and we'll discuss them afterwards.
- What narratives or big pictures are the stories tied to?

Barack Obama: before

- Jan 25, 2007 Families USA Conference

“Let me repeat that: I am absolutely determined that, by the end of the first term of the next president, we should have universal health care in this country.”

Barack Obama: after

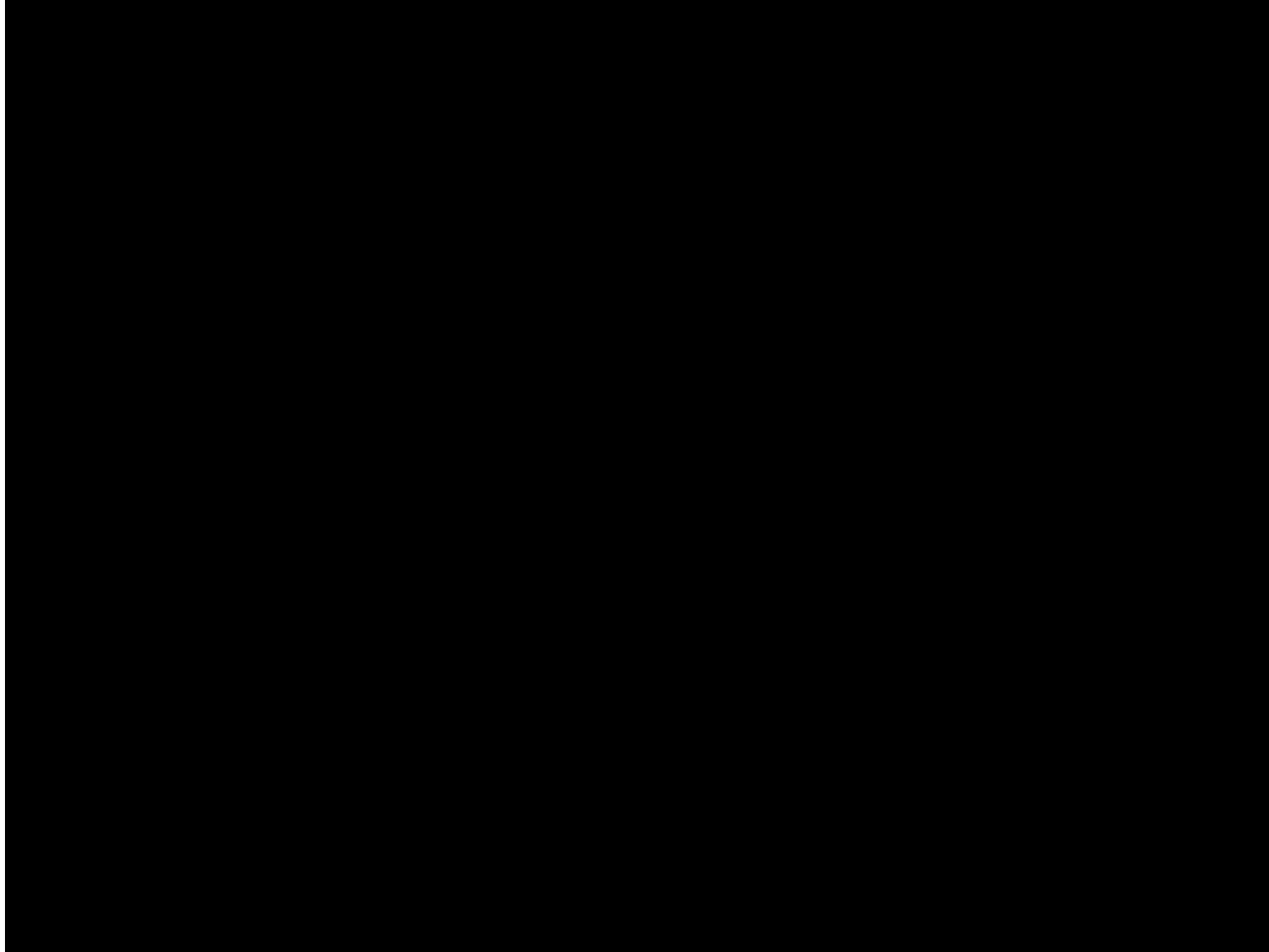


Hillary Clinton: before

- April 18, 2004 NY Times:

“Despite the lack of universal coverage in our country, we still spend more than countries that provide health care to all their citizens. We are No. 1 in the world in health care spending...If we spend so much, even after administrative costs, why does the United States rank behind 47 other countries in life expectancy and 42nd in infant mortality?”

Hillary Clinton: after



What changes did you notice?

- What changes did you notice in the before and after examples?
- Some other things to think about:
 - How did the ads make you **feel**?
 - Did you hear some issues that voters in Florida care about?
 - What values were emphasized?
 - What's the big picture or narrative they are speaking to?

Fighting against attacks

- How can we respond more effectively to negative perceptions and barriers in our proposals.
- Even with a proactive agenda, we know that there will be attacks so we need to prepare responses in advance
- Think about connecting values of guarantees, choice and affordability.
- How will we counter negative perceptions of the role of government and how to finance change?
- Remember to think about people you know and can relate to when coming up with stories and examples.

Watching Harry and Louise - counterattack

- If an H & L ad were running in your area, how would you talk to your friends and voters about the ads?
- What values would you talk about and what barriers would you need to overcome?
- How would you counter some of the arguments made in the ads? What are some counterattack messages that can quickly be deployed if an H & L- like ad airs in your community.

Harry and Louise – 2 samples



A current example from Florida

- "The economy is in a different place right now," said the governor, "Our obligation is to find a way without tax dollars to still provide better health care for our people." (NY Times)
- You're right, the economy is tough right now. And that's exactly why we need to create affordable health care for all citizens in Florida, not just providing bare bones coverage to just a few.
- Health care costs are second only to gas prices when it comes to what economic worries people have when they pay their bills each month. Your bill provides a small number of people with bare bones health care and most of them wouldn't even be covered in the case of an unexpected major medical expense. Voters throughout Florida want and deserve a health care system that allows hard working people who pay their taxes the security and peace of mind to provide decent health care for themselves and their families.

Communications Strategy Map

- Top line: stressing values and not introducing barriers
- Building your stories over several connections (not feeling like you have to win all of the arguments in one communication)
- What's the narrative behind all of the stories?
- How does healthcare relate to the economy, the American Dream and the everyday needs and values of the average voter?

Communications Strategy Map				
Steps in the Conversation	Unaware	Aware but don't care (enough)	Feeling frustrated	What can I do?
Attachment to the issue	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	Waiting to be asked the right task
Values and barriers mix	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
Messaging approach (and stories that illustrate these issues)	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
Actions (what yes/no actions can help us measure where people are at and if they are responding)	Learn more at website	View more than home page; attend a campaign or info event	View action related options on web, 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)
Communication Timeline	long term - set up, 6 - 12 mos before goal	mid term - prep for next step, 6 - 9 mos before goal	mid term - prep for next step, 3 - 6 mos before goal	near term, related to needs, 0 - 3 mos before goal
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.

Creating talking points for key topics in Florida

- Where are your audiences now?
- Pick a state of mind near the beginning of the dialogue (unaware, aware but don't care, feeling frustrated) and develop talking points for your audience.
- Topic 1 – proactive message so the opposition has to respond to you
- Topic 2 – recent cuts to the health care budget and Medicaid
- Topic 3 – why health care is a key economic issue for everyone in the state
- Topic 4 – why fixing health care is good for business
- Topic 5 – addressing the Governor's plan

Proactive messages that work

- I believe that people who work for a living ought to be able to take their kids to a doctor, and people who are retired, ill, or temporarily out of work shouldn't risk losing their life savings because of one illness.
- I believe in a family doctor for every family. It's not right that hard-working Americans are struggling to afford health care and prescription drugs, while we're strangling small businesses with the cost of their employees' health care.

Proactive messages that work

- **Attacking the conservative alternative -**
Every time the market fails to solve a problem, we hear, "Just eliminate regulations and the market will correct itself." That's what we heard with the mortgage industry, the oil companies, and the big corporations that are outsourcing American jobs. Just look at what the "free market" has brought us on health care.

Responses that work

- **Immigration** - I have no intention of letting politicians who want to score political points hold the health care of our own citizens hostage to the immigration problem.

Responses that work

- **Government bureaucracy** - If you want to see what bureaucracy and red tape look like, try reaching a person on the phone the next time you call your own insurance company, and try getting them to explain why they won't pay \$800 of some medical treatment your doctor ordered.

Responses that work

- **Cost of health care reform** - Middle class Americans are having a harder time making ends meet, and we need to cut both their taxes and their health care costs. If that means cutting the profits of insurance companies and requiring big businesses to contribute to the health insurance of their employees, my sympathy is with people who work for a living.

Share talking points

- What were your top 2 or 3 talking points?
- Did your messages change from how you were talking about health care reform before today?
- Share this exercise with colleagues to help guide their thinking and communications about health care reform.

Proactive, unified messaging

- How can we use what we've learned today to create a more unified, cohesive messaging strategy across our many different organizations?
- Using the Communications Strategy Map – how can we use similar messages when talking to people in the first two groups (unaware, aware but don't care)
- What key values do we all want to emphasize?
- What barriers do we need to inoculate against or counter?
- What messages are audiences hearing elsewhere that we might want to support or counter?

Why should people care about health reform in Florida?

- Take back out your 2 – 3 sentences about why people should care about health care in Florida. Would you change anything?
- What narratives do we want to address?
- We're all in this together. We're all angry and affected by rising costs.
- We can leverage smaller communications budgets and our messages will have stronger resonance if we are all emphasizing the same values and connecting to the same narratives

A few closing thoughts

- All of our communications should add up to a “narrative”. A bigger story that all of our other stories fall under.
- All of our stories should connect with the American dream, taking care of our families and building a better future for our children.
- In this tough economy, health care costs are second only to gas prices when it comes to what angers most of us as we pay our bills each month.
- Personal, local stories create the strongest and most memorable connections.
- Policy initiatives that will have the best chance of success will tie back to this big picture/narrative and the values behind the words.

You can do this

- It's about connecting with the person in front of you.
- What are they worried about?
- What do they hope for?
- Tell real stories about real people and help them see we are all talking about the same thing – the American Dream.

Thank you

additional resources are available at: www.herndonalliance.org

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