If you want to improve your communication skills, you’ve come to the right place!
Relatable Agronomy: Communicating in 2017

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• Expand your communications tool box
• Review communications process
• Explain why simple messages are critical
• Learn how readability levels can help
THE ANIMUS, WHICH IS KIND OF LIKE A GENETIC DELOREAN. IT ALLOWS US TO ACCESS OUR ANCESTORS' DNA AND MEMORIES. AND THERE IS A WAR GOING ON BETWEENTEMPLARS, WHO BELIEVE IN WORLD ORDER, AND ASSASSINS, WHO ARE ANARCHISTS.

FANTASTIC. NOW WHAT REALLY IS THE MOVIE ABOUT?
Why tell your story?

1. The public DOES want to know – they are unsure who to trust.

2. You’re GOOD at what your work – and maybe you love it! If so, others might, too!

3. Do you want non-agronomists telling the story?

4. Communicating often, in a relatable way, helps to create a relationship and build that trust.
Why change our process?

Our world is on information overload.

To be truly successful, we need to help others see why our work is important in a short, impactful way.
The Communications Process:

1. Define Audience

2. Develop Message – the words

3. Decide Message Tactic/s – includes “tone”, graphics

4. Evaluate Message Delivery
Define your audience:

Students - age/grade level:
  • Primary - Middle - High school – College

Adults – find common values
  • Demographics
    • Age, education, income, geographic...
  • Psychographics – interests
  • Job category – media, policy...
What your audience wants to know

Vs.

What do YOU think your audience needs to know
The Communications Process:

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What I mean
- Energy level
- Busyness
- Bias
- Trust
- Interest level
- Experience
- Culture
- Values
- Communication skills – listening, retaining

What I understand
- Energy level
- Busyness
- Bias
- Trust
- Interest level
- Experience
- Culture
- Values
- Communication skills – creating, delivering

Noise – distractions, sounds

Sender

Receiver
• We need to create the best message.

• We need to communicate it in relatable ways.

• We need to create good leads, anchors and wrap ups to help our listeners.
“People won’t care how much you know until they know how much you care...”
John Oliver
Money’s Champion of the Year 2016

What can agronomists learn from cat videos?

Cat videos are
• Short,
• Simple,
• Relatable,
• Uplifting, and
• Funny.
Lead with (3-5 rule)
Solutions
Results
Benefits
So What

Fill in – if you find interest
Background
Problems

https://www.compassscicomm.org/the-message-box-workbook
Why write your statement first – no matter your delivery tactic?

• Gets your brain thinking...
• Allows you to “tweak” and prepare...
• Key points for emphasis...
• Find one unique fact = longer-last impression.
Develop your message:

Maximum two-minute, easy explanation of the “why” you do your work.

• If you are participating in research, what do you hope to find?
• If you are a consultant, why do your customers need your help?
• Why is this relevant to your audience?
• “Let me tell you a story...”
Why should your audience care about your work?

• Relevance
• People doing the research care about...
• Emotions that might engage
• Culturally sensitive
• Story-telling fashion = approachable and relatable
Key words to remember:

• Simplify.

• Summarize.

• Streamline.
JARGON
Anchors

- Key words
- Analogies
- Physical demonstrations
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<tr>
<th>Verbs – action words</th>
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Agronomy Feeds the World
Soils Sustain Life
More communications facts –

• The average college graduate reads at an 8\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} grade reading level.

• That’s when they are at their best.

• Listening can be even harder.

• Depends on learning style.
Use Word or other edit tools to help you.

Google docs has spelling and grammar, but not readability – suggested site on handout.
How do retaining walls work?

Retaining walls are landscaping tools to help landowners overcome sloped areas. They often have a visual interest, as well as serve a functional purpose. Many homeowners use retaining walls to increase the amount of usable land in their yard. Civil engineers use them to create usable roadways. Retaining walls can even provide environmental benefits, like reducing erosion and protecting areas from being saturated. Retaining walls can be a simple fix to a steep slope or slumping hillside that can add additional space for your backyard BBQ’s or protect roadways and buildings.

There are four basic types of retaining walls:

1. Gravity walls hold in earth by the weight of the wall material. They could be a stack of large rocks, or more formal like pavers. They can fail easily, and should be used only for short slopes — 3 feet or less.
2. Piling walls use long “piles” — or poles — that go deep into the soil as well as above it. The pilings can be made of metal or treated lumber. They have a good capacity to hold back the soil.
3. Cantilever walls are similar to piling walls. However, they get added strength from an “arm” that extends back into the hill, increasing their capacity to stabilize pressure.
4. Anchored walls are the strongest type of retaining wall, and can be combined with other techniques. As the name implies, an anchor is wrapped around the wall and has a base deeper into the hill, which provides the stabilization.
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Numeracy

NASEM, Communicating Science Effectively: A Research Agenda
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/dbasse/communicating_science/index.htm
The readability of research papers has decreased from 1881-2015, study on 123 scientific journals:

“Lower readability implies less accessibility, particularly for non-specialists, such as journalists, policy-makers and the wider public...One way to achieve this is for science to maximize its accessibility to non-specialists.”

https://elifesciences.org/articles/27725
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How might this apply in your life?

Well, that’s fascinating ...how...
• We can’t guarantee the message is heard correctly...

• But we can use step 4 - evaluate and improve! (“How might this apply in your life?”)
Title or first words: PEOPLE REMEMBER THE

Conclusion, anchors, or last words: BEGINNING AND THE END.

Tips on length limit of communications for maximum impact (titles, blogs, tweets, etc.):
[https://flipboard.com/@flipboard/-astrophysicist-neil-degrasse-tyson-expl/f-0eea57b10c%2Finc.com](https://flipboard.com/@flipboard/-astrophysicist-neil-degrasse-tyson-expl/f-0eea57b10c%2Finc.com)

Writing tips:
[http://withoutbullshit.com/blog/10-top-writing-tips-psychology/](http://withoutbullshit.com/blog/10-top-writing-tips-psychology/)
[https://www.compassscicomm.org/the-message-box-workbook](https://www.compassscicomm.org/the-message-box-workbook)

Readability (besides Word):
[https://readability-score.com/](https://readability-score.com/)