

HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR MEMBERS

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COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH MANAGER
BUZZARDS BAY COALITION

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST CONVOCATION
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2014

HOW TO CREATE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

GOALS

Why are you communicating?

AUDIENCE

Who do you want to talk to?

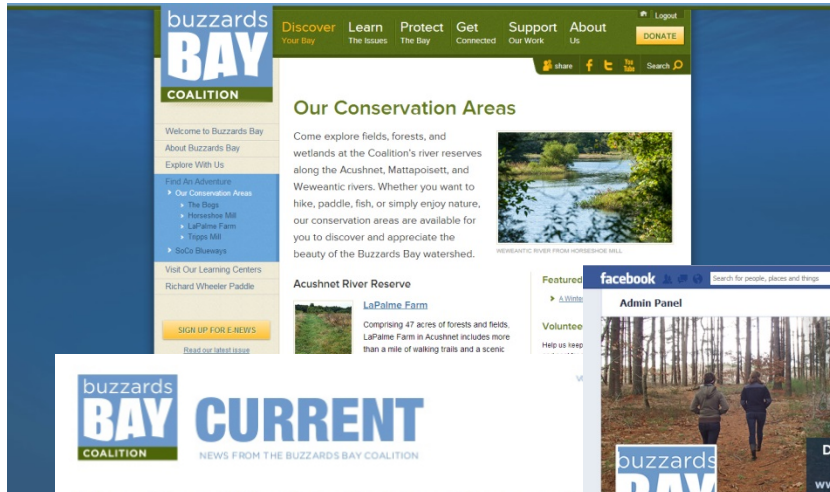
MESSAGE

What are you going to say? **How** are you going to say it?

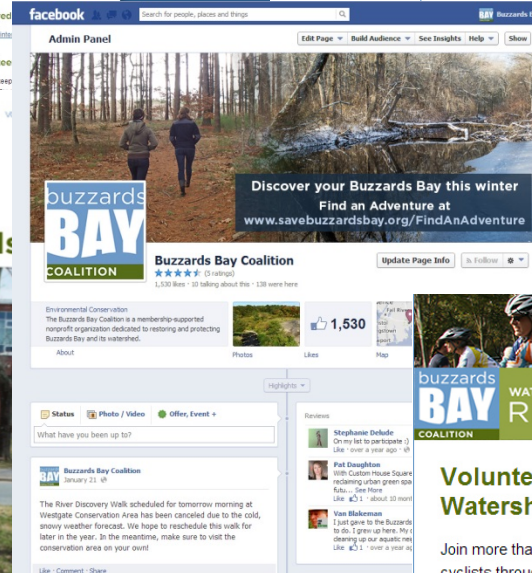
TACTICS

Which tools will you use to tell people what you want to say?

SHIFTING FOCUS



Together We Are Saving Buzzards



News From December 2013

Take a look back at some Buzzards Bay highlights from 2013



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Join more than 70 other volunteers to help to support the 75-mile event that takes cyclists throughout the watershed. Join the fun and help the Coalition raise critical funds to save our irreplaceable bay.

Volunteer Needs

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SHIFTING FOCUS

What do you want people to **know?**

What do you want people to **do?**

What will people **remember?**

GOALS

WHY ARE YOU COMMUNICATING?

A goal is the **end**, not the **means**.

Without clear goals that everyone **agrees** on,
conflict can arise.

Set **SMART** goals that put you on a
path toward success.

SETTING SMART GOALS



EXAMPLES OF SMART GOALS

“To get more members.”

“To grow our membership **by 200 people by the end of 2014.”**

“To raise awareness of our land trust.”

“To increase awareness of our land trust’s **publicly accessible protected properties among outdoor enthusiasts with children under age 13.”**

“To find more volunteers.”

“To recruit and retain **20 new quality volunteers through existing relationships with current staff, board members, and volunteers.”**



AUDIENCE

WHO DO YOU WANT TO TALK TO?

"THE PUBLIC"



DEFINING YOUR AUDIENCE

Retirees

Mothers of children under age 18

Voters

Local elected officials

Elementary school students

Outdoor enthusiasts

Land owners

CREATE A PERSONA

Create a **character** that embodies your audience.

Who is this person?

What is he/she **interested** in?

What does he/she **value**?

Why might he/she **resist** your message?

EXAMPLE OF A PERSONA

Janet, 64, Westport

Occupation: Retired teacher

Family: Husband and three grown children

Household income: \$55,000/year

Ever since Janet retired from her job as an elementary school teacher two years ago, she feels like she's been more active than ever. Most mornings she wakes up at sunrise and heads to the New Bedford YMCA to swim laps. Once a week she drives to Rhode Island to watch her grandson for the day while her daughter and son-in-law are at work. She loves being grandma, and she hopes her other two children have kids soon.



But Janet's favorite place to be is at home in Westport. She and her husband, Henry, recently finished paying off their dream home on the East Branch of the Westport River. She doesn't know what she would do without her serene little piece of paradise. She hopes to pass her home on to one of her children someday so it can stay in the family for years to come.

Every day, Janet tries to take a few minutes to sit in her Adirondack chair in the backyard and enjoy the quiet view of the river. Sometimes she brings a book or knits; other times she just watches the water flow by. She often sees people in kayaks, but she's never tried it herself – it looks a little too dangerous to her.

On weekends, Janet mostly stays at home. Her children and friends often visit for tea or a home-cooked meal. Henry likes to golf on weekends, but Janet has never taken much of an interest in the activity, so she usually lets him go on his own with his friends.

Janet is connected to Buzzards Bay, but she is unaware of local environmental issues and is not motivated to take action to protect and restore the Bay.

MESSAGE

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SAY?

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SAY IT?

WHAT WILL PEOPLE REMEMBER?

What Is A Land Trust?

Land trusts are local, state, or regional nonprofit organizations directly involved in protecting land for its natural, recreational, scenic, historical, or productive value. Most land trusts are private, nonprofit corporations. Land trusts are not "trusts" in the legal sense, and may also be called "conservancies," "foundations," or any number of other names descriptive of their purpose.

Land trusts are distinguished by their first-hand involvement in land transactions or management. This involvement can take many forms. Some land trusts purchase or accept donations of land or of conservation easements (permanent, binding agreements that restrict the uses of a piece of land to protect its conservation resources). Some manage land owned by others or advise landowners on how to preserve their land. Some land trusts help negotiate conservation transactions in which they play no other role. Land trusts often work cooperatively with government agencies by acquiring or managing land, researching open space needs and priorities, and assisting in the development of open space plans. They also may work with other nonprofit organizations and sometimes with developers. A land trust may do one, several, or all of these things.

Some land trusts are organized to protect a single piece of property, but the more active trusts have a larger land protection agenda. They may focus their efforts in a community, in a region, on a particular type of resource, or on a protection project. Some operate statewide and work cooperatively with local land trusts in addition to conducting their own land conservation projects. Resources protected by land trusts include forests, prairie grasslands, islands, urban gardens, river corridors, farmland, watersheds, parklands, marshes, ranchland, scenic vistas, cultural landscapes, Civil War battlefields, and hiking trails.

Most land trusts depend on volunteer leadership and support even if they also have a professional staff. They have the potential to bring together a wide range of people in a community, such as naturalists, planners, farmers, hunters, landowners, community leaders, sometimes developers, and others who care about special lands in their communities.

(Source: The Land Trust Alliance. Starting a Land Trust: A Guide to Forming a Land Conservation Organization. Virginia: The Land Trust Alliance, 1990.)

LAND TRUST ADVANTAGES

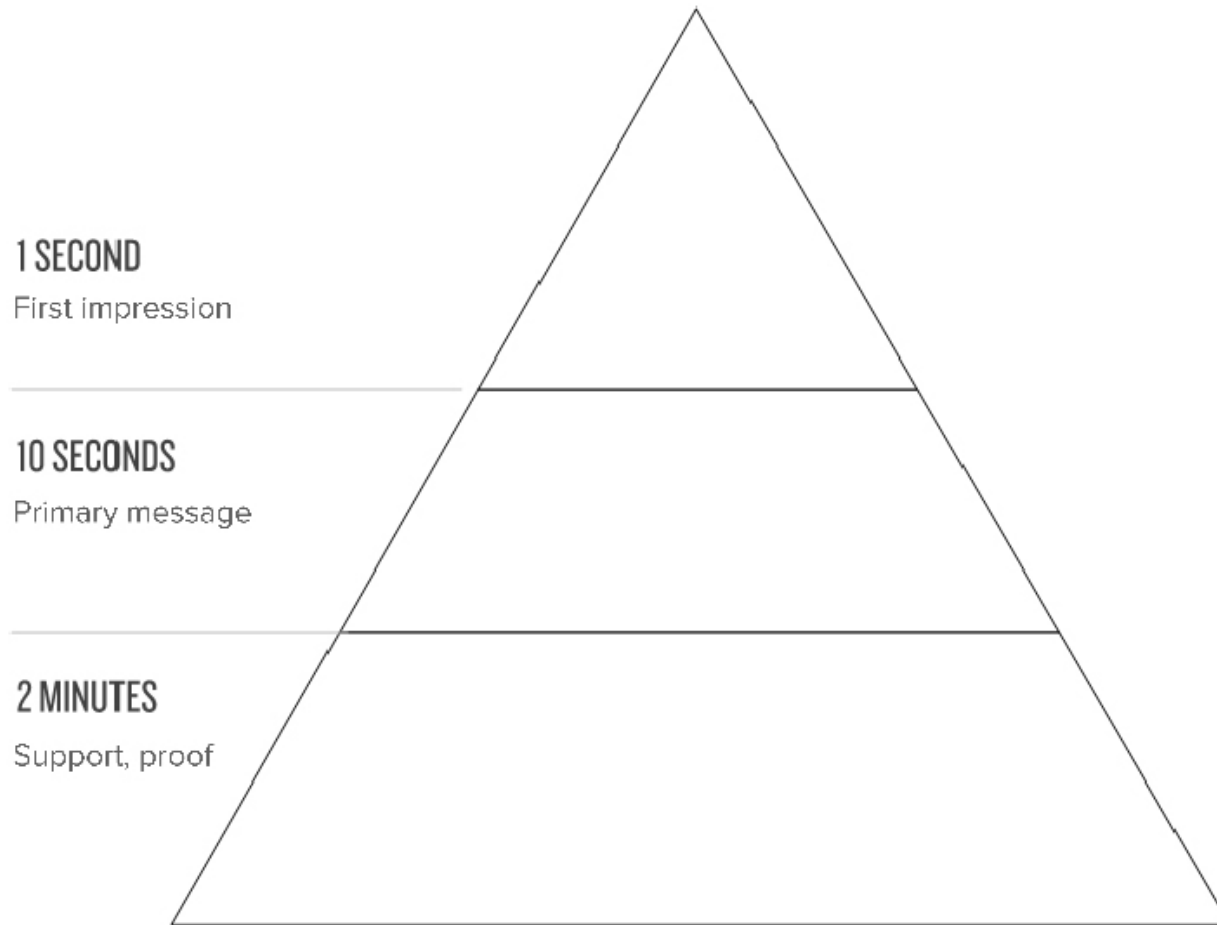
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OR



MESSAGE PYRAMID



EFFECTIVE MESSAGE TECHNIQUES

TELL A STORY

Hook your audience on an **ongoing narrative** about your mission.

SOLVE A PROBLEM

Offer a **solution** to your audience's wants and needs.

ANSWER A QUESTION

Provide **information** your audience is seeking.

USE TESTIMONIALS

Find **supporters** who are part of your target audience.

TALK ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY FIRST

Talk about **water** first and foremost.

Connect land conservation to **public health**.

Show how land conservation keeps your community **safe from natural threats**.

TIE IN PEOPLE'S VALUES

Emphasize **benefits to people** as the best reason to conserve land over protecting nature for its own sake.

Stress the importance of protecting natural areas to help **children spend more time outdoors**.

Talk about protecting land and water for **future generations**.

Use inclusive language such as **we** and **our**.

Tap into people's **pride of place**.

USE WORDS THAT WORK

Open space → Natural areas

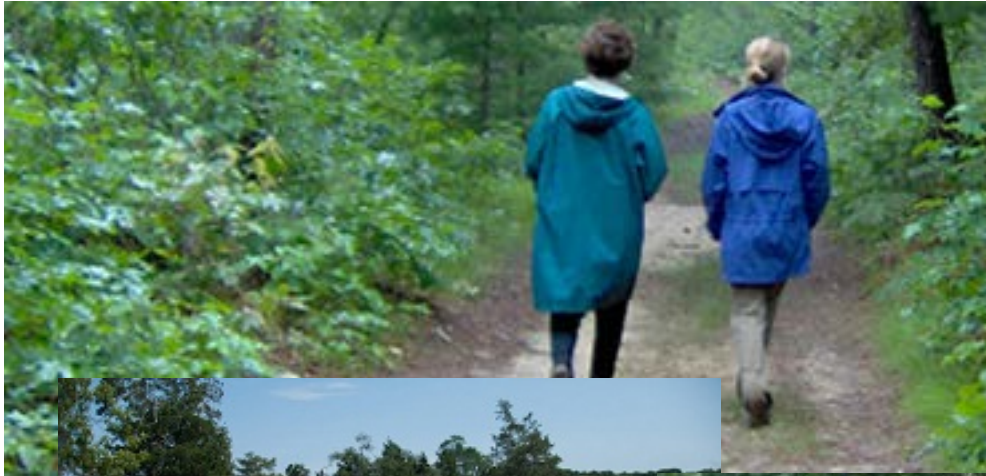
Recreation → Family activities

Watershed → Upstream and downstream

Biodiversity → Fish and wildlife

Sprawl → Poorly planned growth

USE COMPELLING IMAGERY



(Not like these.)

SHOW FACES



SHOW BEHAVIORS

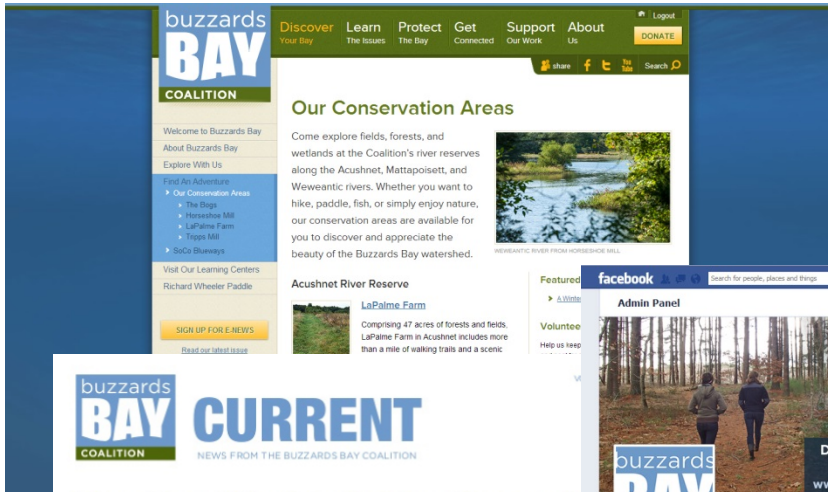




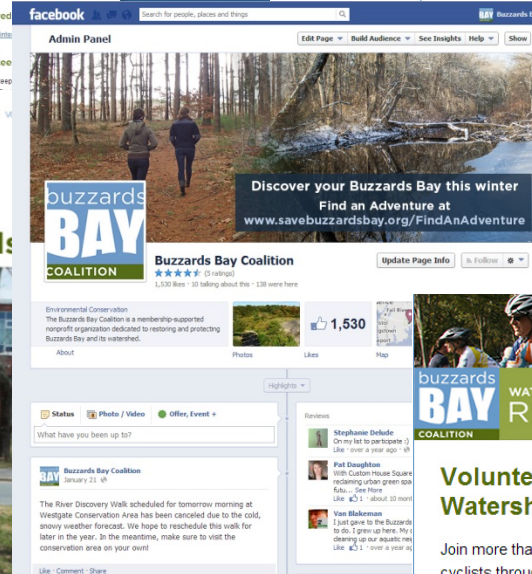
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WHICH TOOLS WILL YOU USE?

MANY OPTIONS



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USE THE BEST CHANNELS FOR YOUR MESSAGE AND AUDIENCE

Only take on what you have time to commit to.

Keep your content updated and fresh.

Be consistent.

Include lots of great photos.

ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND

What do you want people to **know?**

What do you want people to **do?**

What will people **remember?**

QUESTIONS?

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Buzzards Bay Coalition

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