

2024 NW Straits Initiative Conference

Telling your story: Science Communications

November 15, 2024 | Delta Hotel | Everett, WA

Contact information and resources

Panel

Moderator: Bellamy Pailthorp, KNKX www.knkx.org

- Newsletter www.knkx.org/newsletters
- Radio shows: <https://www.knkx.org/people/bellamy-pailthorp>

Panelist: Justin Cox, SeaDoc <https://www.seadocsociety.org/>

- Free newsletter www.seadocsociety.org/newsletter
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/seadocsociety
- X: www.x.com/SeaDocSociety
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/SeaDocSociety/
- Show: *Salish Sea Wild* www.seadocsociety.org/salish-sea-wild
- Podcast: *Pod of Orcas* www.seadocsociety.org/podoforcas
 - Episode 10. Getting sassy on social media with the WA State DNR Rachel Terlep

Panelist: Kari Neumeyer, Northwest Treaty Tribes www.nwtreatytribes.org

- Magazine www.nwtreatytribes.org/publications/magazine/
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/nwtreatytribes/
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/nwtreatytribes/
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/northwest-treaty-tribes
- X: www.twitter.com/nwtreatytribes
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/@NorthwestTreatyTribes

Panelist: Curt Hart, WA Department of Ecology www.ecology.wa.gov

- Blog: www.ecology.wa.gov/blog
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/EcologyWA/
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/EcologyWA
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/EcologyWA/
- Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/ecologywa/
- X: www.twitter.com/ecologywa

Resources

Websites

- SciComm Toolkits: <https://connect.agu.org/sharingscience/resources/toolkits>
- 12 Examples of Stunning Science Comms <https://shorthand.com/the-craft/12-examples-of-stunning-science-comms/index.html>
- Science Policy Public Outreach <https://www.ascb.org/science-policy-public-outreach/science-outreach/communication-toolkits/best-practices-in-effective-science-communication/>

Books

- ***Don't Be Such a Scientist*** by Randy Olson

Papers

- Best Practices in Environmental Communications
<https://www.fromthelabbench.com/from-the-lab-bench-science-blog/2015/11/8/best-practices-in-environmental-communication-a-scientific-paper>

Blogs on Science Comms

- [What scientists can learn from stand-up comedians](#)
- [Science communication: both a science and an art](#)
- [Storytelling, science blogs and science communication](#)
- [Can science be simple? Distilling complexity into engaging images.](#)
- [Hashtag SciComm: How social media platforms are shaping the future of science](#)

Guide to key messages and talking points from Curt Hart

Most quotes in the media are 27 words, contain 3 messages, and can be stated in 9 seconds.

Example of a good key message structure:

Compassion

Climate change is affecting our communities and we need to take action to preserve our resources for people today and the future.

Action

The policies we're developing will move Washington to cleaner energy, reduce air pollution and help slow climate change.

Optimism

This progressive approach will help reduce the primary causes of climate change and that's what we need to do for people in Washington and around the globe.

When developing messages, consider:

1. Who's interested?
2. What are their concerns?
3. What do you want the audience to understand or do?
4. Who supports?
5. Who opposes?

Key messages: Why it matters, What difference it makes, Why should anyone care, Good quotes, What people should remember – your soundbite

Talking points: 5W+H, Factual, How things work, Processes, Calls-to-action

Pre-Interview Story Planner

DETAILS

What's the story?

Who's the audience?

Why should the reader care? Why does it matter?

What's the most important/interesting element in the story?

What's the best form for this story?

READER'S LIKELY QUESTIONS

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

OTHER ELEMENTS

Photo

Graphic

Video

Audio

List

Sidebar

Get involved

Map



OUTLINE - Rough format for your story (optional)

Lede: Compelling hook

Nut Graph: Vital background info, whether interesting or mundane, that must be conveyed

Body: Main elements

Kicker/conclusion

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THE MESSAGE BOX

The message box is a tool to help you organize your thoughts and identify key points. It is designed to be flexible – it can be used to help structure a presentation, organize a lecture, outline a proposal or prepare for an interview.

Your audience – a journalist, colleagues at a professional meeting or a group of second graders - can only absorb a limited amount of information. Your goal as an effective communicator is to identify the information that is critical to your audience - what *really* matters to them, what do they *really* need to know. Start by listing the central issue, then “frame” the issue with the most relevant information.

Streamline your information into concise messages by answering the following questions:

- What are the problems/conflicts/issues involved (Problems?)
- Why does this information matter to my listener (So What?)
- What are some of the possible solutions to this problem (Solutions?)
- What are the potential benefits of resolving this problem (Benefits?)

Consider these questions as your “starting point.” If the questions don’t exactly apply, rework them to get at the “meat” of your information - keep asking yourself *So What? Why?*

Pare down your ideas so that each message is one or two concise sentences – if you still have a paragraph, keep working. Once you have honed in on your key points, list anecdotes, sound-bites, and facts that reinforce your messages.

The principle is easy but it takes time to develop messages that work for you and your audience. Keep working to refine your messages - they will evolve and get better over time.

Audience: _____

