

2 CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE

Once you have developed your campaign strategy - knowing what you want to achieve and who you need to target to help achieve this goal - it's time to craft your message.

WHAT MAKES A MESSAGE EFFECTIVE?

A message tells your audience (which could be policy makers, journalists, partners or the general public) the change goal or target, how they can contribute, why it is worth doing, and the impact potential of their actions. An effective message captures the attention of the target audience, is easily understood and remembered, and does not require further explanation. In some campaigns, a different message is crafted for each audience.

A message is a simple statement that will be repeated over and over to persuade and move your audience to take action. The big challenge is crafting a message that breaks through the clutter and is heard.

Essential elements of framing your message include: • Defining the problem • Who will be impacted • And the solution. The elements should reinforce each other to connect seamlessly into a coherent story.

Your message must be memorable. Use images, slogans, and metaphors to capture the essence.

MESSAGES THAT SELL

1. Concept Description
2. Problem Statement
3. Overt Benefit
4. Reason to Believe
5. Call to Action

THE MESSAGE SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

- *The “ask” – a brief statement of what the campaign wants to change. It should be positive and inspiring.*
- *The reason for the “ask” – why the campaign is intended to achieve this, why something has to change.*
- *What is at stake – what will happen if the issue is not addressed or if the proposed change does not happen.*
- *Action to be taken – what the campaign calls for audiences to do in order to effect or support the proposed change.*

EXAMPLE OF CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

Nigeria: Fractured and Forgotten

Injustice and a lack of inclusive governance that falls along ethno-religious fault lines threatens the stability of Africa's most important nation. Among the 25 most populous countries in the world, [Nigeria ranks highest](#) in religion-related social hostilities.

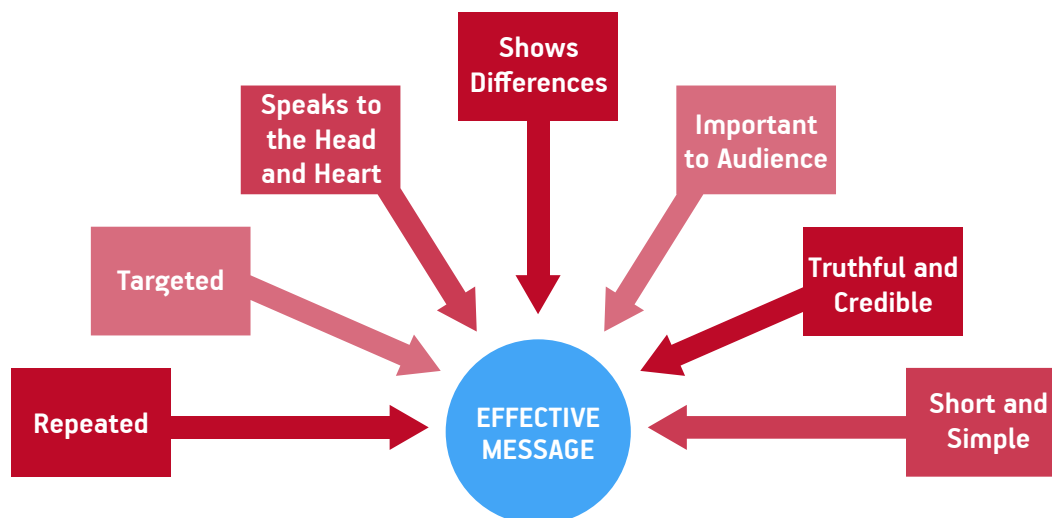
Nigeria is at a breaking point, one that the United States cannot afford to ignore. Nigeria is the lynchpin of regional stability and a strategic partner with the U.S. in the struggle against extremism. Swift and precise policy decisions from the U.S. and in partnership with Nigerian civil society can have profound stabilizing effects.

In a few sentences, a message should communicate why your issue is important and what you want others to do for your cause. It should also give your audience choices of actions and tell them what you hope the outcome of the actions will be.

Audiences have different needs and expectations, and respond to messages tailored to their language, context and values. How you frame your message depends on the context you are working in and who you are talking to.

*It is worth spending the time to develop and tailor your messages for different audiences, for different contexts, and for different media. It is useful to develop your organizational description (if you have one), your campaign aims and your calls to action in **varying lengths**: for example in one sentence, a short paragraph, a long paragraph and on one page. Setting yourself a challenge, adapt these messaging elements into 140 characters for Twitter.*

CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE MESSAGES



DEFINE YOUR MESSAGE(S)

Communications Topic #1:		Priority #1 Audience:		
A) Define the Basics				
WHAT do you need to communicate? (the key facts)	To WHO?	WHY?	WHEN?	WHAT action do you want them to do as a result?
B) Add Elements to Maximize Relevance				
What will attract their ATTENTION?	What is the solution you have that will capture their INTEREST?		What will create a sense of urgency to ACT?	
Write Your Message				