

THE POWER OF A POLISHED MESSAGE

Presented by:

Amy Wescott

Polish Writing & Editing

August 26, 2018

STUDENT TRAVEL . . .

Great Opportunities!

But Also

Great Challenges!

Especially with

Messaging

WHAT IS YOUR “MESSAGE”?

Your message is **what you communicate about your organization, product, service, or event.**

WHAT MAKES UP YOUR “MESSAGE”?

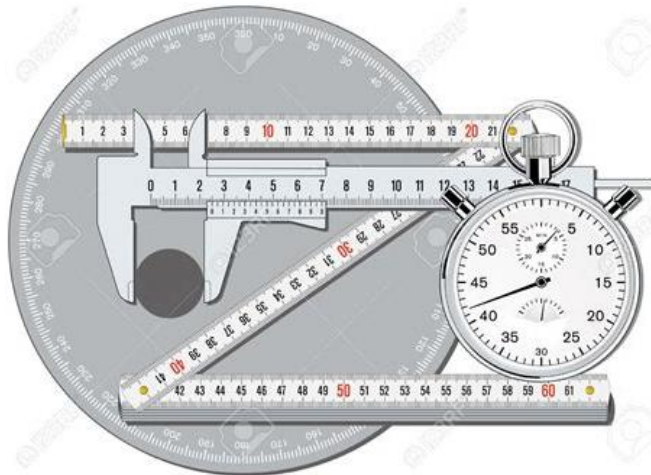
What You SAY

And

What You SIGNAL

GOAL: A **POLISHED** MESSAGE

A **POLISHED** message
is only achieved when
what you **SAY** and **SIGNAL**
about your organization
are **CALIBRATED**.



CALIBRATED

“carefully adjusted to achieve
a specific purpose”

TWO TYPES OF UNCALIBRATED MESSAGES

POLISHED-SOUNDING “SAY” NOT BACKED UP BY “SIGNAL”

- Organization has well-constructed written and oral messages and a strategic / effective plan to deliver them

SO

- The organization and its offerings sound attractive to potential customers.

BUT

- The organization’s behavior doesn’t consistently measure up to its polished-sounding “say.”

SO

- The organization risks its ability to sustain these customers (or attract new ones) because the *signal doesn’t match the say*.

TWO TYPES OF UNCALIBRATED MESSAGES

ON-MISSION “SIGNAL” NOT EXPRESSED BY “SAY”

- Organization does NOT have well-constructed written and oral messages nor a strategic / effective plan to deliver them.

SO

- Potential customers likely know little about their work or are misinformed.

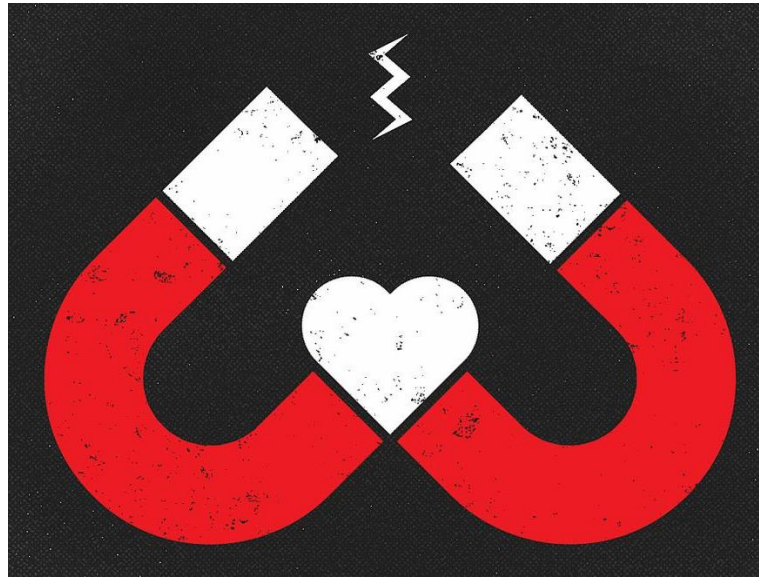
BUT

- In reality, the organization delivers a fantastic product or service.

EVEN SO

- Their reach will be limited because its *say doesn't match the signal*.

UNCALIBRATED MESSAGES LACK POWER



POWER

“the ability to attract and sustain”

WHAT MAKES A MESSAGE CALIBRATED?

- Differentiation
- Alignment
- Consistency

DIFFERENTIATION

An organization's message is **DIFFERENTIATED**
when what it **SAYS** and **SIGNALS**
is **UNIQUE** from
the messages of organizations that offer
similar products, services, or events.

LOW-INCOME HEALTHCARE SERVICES — DIFFERENTIATION?



FAITH
COMMUNITY
HEALTH



HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR MESSAGE IS DIFFERENTIATED?

LOOK AT WHAT YOU SAY

- Do your mission, vision, and purpose statements have a unique and specific focus?
- Does what you say publicly about your organization, products, services, and events (orally and in print) emphasize your uniqueness / how these are different? How?
- Do you communicate specific examples about your organization's effectiveness within your niche? How?

LOOK AT WHAT YOU SIGNAL

- Does your organization serve a unique niche in your community / industry? If not, how could you narrow or broaden?
- What would the people you serve say is unique about their experiences with your organization?

ALIGNMENT

An organization's message is **ALIGNED** when
what IT **SAYS** and **SIGNALS**,
both internally and externally, and
what is **PERCEIVED** by the public
MATCHES.

Chelyabinsk, Russia

Asteroid — February 15, 2013

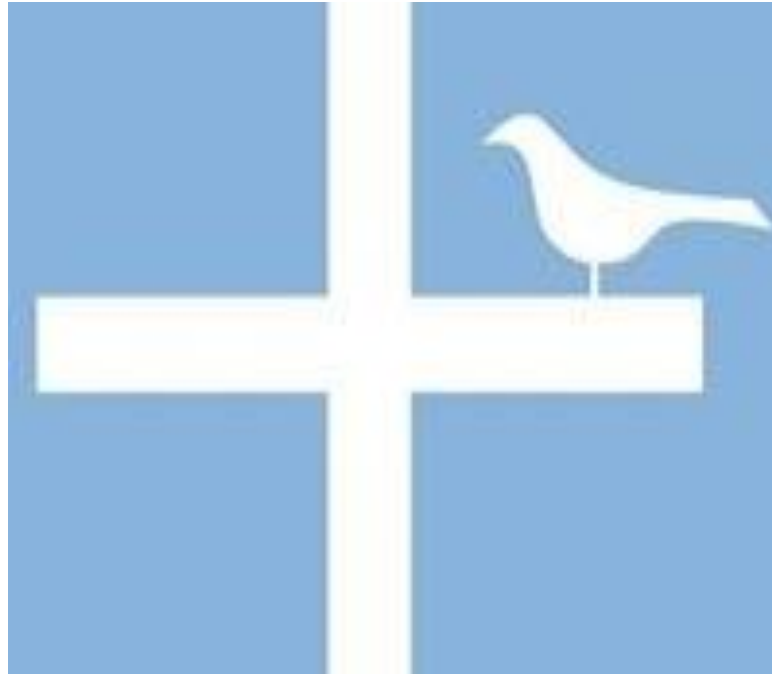
- Scientists started asking, *What can be done to prevent a massive asteroid from destroying the earth?*



Why is **ALIGNMENT** so important?



A small change in trajectory over a large distance means a large change of direction at the end of that distance.



FAITH COMMUNITY HEALTH

SAY ALIGNED WITH SIGNAL?

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION?

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR MESSAGE IS ALIGNED?

LOOK AT WHAT YOU SIGNAL

- Are your mission, vision, and purposes lived out in your organization's activity? Or, has it drifted away from, or extended well beyond, your original focus?
- Are your stated values reflected consistently in how you treat those you serve? How?
- Does what you say publicly (orally and in print) give an accurate picture of the activity and values of your organization? Or is your say too limited or too inflated? In what ways?

LOOK AT HOW YOU ARE PERCEIVED

- Are you aware of how you are perceived in the community / industry, both positively and negatively? How?
- If yes, do you have a communication plan to accentuate the positives and mitigate the negatives? What is it?
- Are you aware of any misconceptions the public has about your organization, product, service, or event and why they might have them? What are these misconceptions?
- If yes, do you have a strategy to clear up the misconceptions? What is it?

CONSISTENCY

Your organization has a **CONSISTENT** message
when it regularly emphasizes its
UNIQUE ACTIVITY and **VALUES**
and proactively, but subtly,
addresses possible **MISCONCEPTIONS**
across **VARIOUS FORMS OF MEDIA.**

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR MESSAGE IS CONSISTENT?

- Your message is **aligned**.
 - Your message will never be consistent if what you SAY, SIGNAL, and what is PERCEIVED are not aligned.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR MESSAGE IS CONSISTENT?

- Your messages have a “sustained emphasis.”
 - What are the top 3 activities (tangibles) you want to be known for?
 - What are the top 3 values (intangibles) you want to be known for?
 - What are the top 3 misconceptions/criticisms you want to address or challenge?
- Your messages consistently incorporate your sustained emphasis.
- You utilize various media channels to both SHOW and TELL this sustained emphasis.

REMEMBER . . .

A **CALIBRATED** message is:

- **DIFFERENTIATED.**
- **ALIGNED.**
- **CONSISTENT.**

A **CALIBRATED** message is a **POLISHED** message.

POLISH = POWER!

PITFALLS TO CALIBRATION

- “Just Do Its”
 - Passionate and eager to provide product, service, or event, but they do not focus on messaging strategy.
 - *Focus on SIGNAL at the expense of SAY*
- “Noble Wanderers”
 - Initially develop messaging strategy, but they get distracted by new/unexpected needs or opportunities.
 - *SIGNAL no longer matches the SAY*

PITFALLS TO CALIBRATION

- “Wizard of Oz”
 - Focus on what they have said they are / what they hope to be, not what they really are
 - *Put their best SAY forward, but they are masking known issues with the organization, product, service, or event - SAY doesn't match SIGNAL.*
- “Head in the Clouds”
 - Focus on what they have said they are / what they hope to be, not what they really are
 - *Put their best SAY forward, but are unaware of the real issues with the organization, product, service, or event - SAY doesn't match SIGNAL*

PITFALLS TO CALIBRATION

- “Need Some Help!”
 - Lack of skill, training, or resources necessary to create a polished message (SAY and SIGNAL).

REMEMBER . . .

A **CALIBRATED** message is:

- **DIFFERENTIATED.**
- **ALIGNED.**
- **CONSISTENT.**

A **CALIBRATED** message is a **POLISHED** message.

POLISH = POWER!

Questions

Presenter Contact

Amy Wescott

amy@polishwritingservices.com

417-527-0501

SYTA Strategic Partners

strategic | PARTNERS

.VISIT.
ALBUQUERQUE
CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

AON
Empower Results®

BIRMINGHAM



Branson
MISSOURI
ExploreBranson.com

BROADWAY
Inbound

Cedar Fair
Entertainment Company

Disney
Theatrical Group

Disney
YOUTH
PROGRAMS

THE
EMPIRE STATE
BUILDING

fly my group

OFFICE GROUP
SALES
BOX

BROADWAY.COM

MCH
Strategic Data

Medieval Times
DINNER & TOURNAMENT

MERLIN
ENTERTAINMENTS

LEGENDS.
ATTRACTIONS
ONE WORLD
OBSERVATORY. ONE
SKYSPACE
LOS ANGELES

TravelAdvocates
GROUP HOTEL SPECIALISTS

UNIVERSAL
ORLANDO RESORT
Youth Programs

Visit Baltimore

SYTA
The Voice of Student & Youth Travel®

Teach&Travel
The Official Publication of SYTA

SYTA
The Voice of Student & Youth Travel®

syta youth foundation
Travel Changes Young Lives for Good