Why Key Messages Are Key

Key messages are the main points of a story that you wish to communicate to your audience. They help you stay focused on your topic and make it easier for people to have a clear understanding of what you are saying. When being interviewed by the media, key messages help you to communicate consistently and accurately.

WHEN DEVELOPING KEY MESSAGE, BE SURE THEY ARE:
- Brief and to the point
- Factual
- Easy to use in a variety of settings and contexts
- Focused on the topic you wish to discuss

To be most effective, you should only have three or four key messages. If need be, you can support each message with sub-points that carry a little more detail. And remember to ensure consistency; anyone who might be contacted by the media should be given a set of your library’s messages.

Recently, the Libraries of Washington State developed a statewide campaign and a toolkit that was available for all libraries to use the campaign to its fullest possibilities. The following are examples from the toolkit.

THE LIBRARIES OF WASHINGTON STATE MARKETING CAMPAIGN MESSAGES:
- Libraries are exciting places filled with opportunity and possibility. Everyone can find the best information, services and much more at their fingertips...all at the library.
- Libraries are unique in this information age. Nearly everything can be found online or in print all with the help of highly trained staff.
- Libraries are special assets in each of their communities. Not only do they provide us with important information services but they act to “anchor” communities while providing a great value for us all as taxpayers.

SUPPORTING MESSAGES FOR THE CAMPAIGN:
- Libraries are places for lifelong learning while sparking our imagination. They offer something for everyone from two to 92.
- Libraries have technology that transcends time and distance. I can access information from around the world easily. I can access the library online 24/7.
- Library staffs are incredibly helpful. If I need information and don’t know how to go about finding it, a librarian is always there to help me.
- Libraries are more than just my community public library. Specialized, academic, state and tribal libraries are also amazing community resources.
- Libraries provide incredible places for exploration of the mind and the imagination. I can’t imagine life without libraries!

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PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE PARTNERS FOR VIBRANT AND EDUCATED COMMUNITIES. They provide a dynamic array of resources, services and programming that help make their communities attractive, vital places for businesses and their employees.

LIBRARIES ARE PLACES OF OPPORTUNITY. They help people of all ages and backgrounds to lead better, more satisfying lives. Many libraries offer English classes, foreign language collections and other services to help newcomers adjust to life in a new country.

LIBRARIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR A FREE PEOPLE. They protect our right to know by providing access to a full spectrum of ideas, resources and services. Admission is free. No questions are asked.

LIBRARIES PRESERVE OUR PAST, INFORM OUR PRESENT AND INSPIRE OUR FUTURE. Libraries connect us with books and other materials that help us to learn from the past and prepare for the future. Not just books, but photographs, artifacts, historical documents and other pieces of our heritage that the Internet will never offer.

LIBRARIES SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING. From cradle to grave, libraries provide books, classes and other resources to help us keep learning. “Tuition” is free. All it takes is a library card.

LIBRARIES ARE A GREAT AMERICAN BARGAIN. Check out a couple of novels and audio books, some picture books for the kids, some CDs and DVDs and the savings quickly add up. Libraries are paid for with less than 2 percent of all public tax dollars and used by almost two-thirds of the population.

LIBRARIES LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD. Libraries provide resources and services that help people of all incomes learn to read, use computers and develop other skills they need to succeed. A report titled “Toward Equality of Access” from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation says “…if you can reach a public library, you can reach the Internet.”

LIBRARIES ARE GREAT PLACES FOR KIDS. Starting with picture books and storyhour and continuing with summer reading and other programs, the library opens the door to learning, imagination and wonder. Kids learn both the thrill and responsibility of owning their own “charge card”-one that lets them borrow books, movies, music, games and more.

LIBRARIES SUPPORT A COMMUNITY OF READERS. Libraries promote a lifelong reading habit starting with storytimes for preschoolers and continuing with special collections and programs for teens. Many libraries offer book discussion groups, presentations by authors and other book-themed programming for children and adults, also literacy classes for adults.
While the following key messages and talking points were created for the Campaign for America’s Libraries discussing the value library’s in your community, you can adapt them for your own library. Use these key messages and talking points in everything from special press releases to daily conversations with the general public.

**KEY MESSAGES**

**LIBRARIES BRING YOU THE WORLD.**

There are more than 120,000 public, school, academic and special libraries across the country that put the world at our fingertips. Where else can you have access to nearly everything in print and online all in one place? Internet connections, online databases and computer training courses put your library at the forefront of the information age, making information accessible regardless of your age, income or background. With today’s library technology, libraries are reaching beyond their walls to connect to the larger, global community. Pittsburgh reaches Paris and Boise links to Beijing. Today’s library technology means that information from around the world is just a few clicks away and connects us like never before. And the good news is that there are still all those great books, videos, magazines and journals you have come to expect and enjoy at your library.

**LIBRARIES ARE CHANGING AND DYNAMIC PLACES.**

Librarians are trained experts, on the forefront of the information age. In a world that’s information rich, they are information smart and help ensure a society where everyone is literate as well as “information literate.” Today’s libraries are not the quiet places you remember. They are modern community centers for information, education and entertainment where the whole community comes together. From preschool story hour to homework help, from academic research to special collections, libraries are as vibrant as ever.

Your local librarian is a perfect to help you navigate through today’s information age. Our nation’s 140,000 librarians are experts in our ever-changing world of information. They help people of all ages find the resources they need and want, whether it’s a book, a video or a website. They also teach adults and children alike critical information literacy skills - the skills to find, use and evaluate information in all formats. They’ll help you find the right answer.

In colleges and universities, librarians gather, organize and preserve information for scholars and researchers to utilize in developing solutions for the future. In corporations, law offices, consulting firms and government, librarians research and prepare briefings and reports used by top executives and officials to make important decisions. In schools, librarians work collaboratively with teachers to teach students the skills they need not only to do homework, but also to find and use information throughout their lives. In public libraries, librarians are training adults and children to use new technology like the Internet effectively and responsibly.

**LIBRARIES ARE PLACES OF OPPORTUNITY.**

Libraries are part of the American Dream, places for education, self-help and lifelong learning. Whether you are starting a small business, planning for college or pursuing a new hobby, your library can get you started. Libraries provide children with their first exposure to books, teach families how to safely navigate the Internet together; help doctors research
the latest medical findings; and provide students young and old with the resources to write everything from a book report to a dissertation. They help immigrants adjust to a new way of life, help us rediscover our heritage through multilingual collections and bring arts and culture to our doorstep through lectures, musical performances and art exhibits.

So when did you last spend some time at your library? If it’s been awhile, you’ll be pleasantly surprised at how libraries have embraced the latest technological advances while maintaining the traditional programs and services that have made them one of America’s most dynamic and respected institutions.

If you haven’t been lately, come take another look at your library. Instead of being overwhelmed by the information that’s out there, find someone to help you make sense of it all. Your librarian will help you plan your vacation in Italy and a whole lot more.

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These talking points are simple, short bits of information that can be used in a press conference or interview.

**TALKING POINTS ON THE THEME OF OPPORTUNITY:**
- In a world where knowledge is power, libraries open doors to knowledge and bring power to anyone who wants to enter.
- With yourself as your teacher and your librarian as coach, libraries are a place of lifelong learning.

**TALKING POINTS ON THE THEME OF CHANGING AND DYNAMIC:**
- For many libraries, miles are meaningless. Libraries today are connected to information and resources around the world. Livermore reaches London, Tustin accesses Tokyo. Today’s library technology means that information from around the world is just a few clicks away.
- What’s happening at your library? In one typical library, three o’clock on Mondays means children are listening to a storyteller, first-time computer users are learning to navigate the Web, retirees are in a discussion group on the latest best seller, and students are in search of information for their term papers.

**TALKING POINTS ON THE THEME OF BRINGING YOU THE WORLD:**
- Libraries are your neighborhood’s “How To” resource. How to cook the perfect soufflé, write a better resume, find government information, do your homework.
- Libraries are the ultimate equal opportunity resource.
THE MANY MOODS OF COLOR
By Pantone®

Portions reproduced from “COLORS FOR YOUR EVERY MOOD” with the permission of Leatrice Eiseman
Color is the single most important design element in creating spaces that reflect mood and style. Without color, life would be very bleak. Color surrounds us and defines our world. We are soothed by certain colors and excited by others. We use color to describe our world ... to change a house into our home ... to attract attention, make a statement, or blend into a team. We may not always choose things for their color but ultimately we select every item by its color. Color has forever fascinated people, not only in nature but as a symbol and at times as a physical presence.

Why do we choose the colors we do? How and when did we come to know which is our favorite color? Do we love only colors that complement us physically? How much are our preferences based on good and bad associations and memories of a certain color at a certain time? Why is color such a personal decision and what do our choices reveal about our true nature? Let’s explore some of the different colors in our world so you can look at how you think you want each of your rooms to feel.

**RED: feel the excitement**

Throughout history, red has signaled excitement, dynamism, danger and sex. It elicits the strongest of emotions in every culture: love and the pulsating heart; anarchy and the waving war banner; Satan and the martyred saint. It is the color of life and the color of evil, the color of danger and the color of excitement. Red’s message is ardent and impassioned, never insipid. From the gentlest of shell pink to the deepest vibrant ruby red; at its warmest, it’s romantic or passionate, at its coolest, it's mature, authoritative, regal. Red is commanding, whatever its shade.

**PINK AND ROSE: soft and innocent**

Red is the matriarch and all the pink offspring emanate from her. Where red is an obvious "flush," pinks are a modest “blush.” Pink is red with much of the passion removed, a watered-down red. Pink tempers passion with purity; it elicits an aura of innocent romance. It is the most gentle, blissful, and acquiescent of reds.

Pink is a garden of soft spring flowers. It is the flower of the species dianthus whose name in Old English is pynke. Synonymous with rose in the romance languages, variations of pink are given floral names like Wild Rose, Geranium Pink, Azalea Pink.

Light pink is innocence and babyhood Powder Pink, Heavenly Pink, Candy Pink. These connote sweetness, tenderness, intimacy, softness, and baby girls. Pinks such as Cloud Pink, Chalk Pink, Pearl, and Lotus are perceived as sweet-smelling and lighthearted. Muted, dusty roses and pinks,
such as Sea Pink, Mauveglow, Blush, Silver Pink, Dusty Rose, and Ash Rose, are the most sophisticated and upscale tints in the pink family. Brighter, clearer pinks such as Strawberry Pink, Confetti, Bubblegum, Candy Pink, Aurora Pink, and Prism Pink are youthful and fun.

Sexy Pink
The brightest variations of the color, such as Shocking Pink, Hot Pink, Phlox Pink, and Fuchsia Pink, have much the same dynamism as vibrant reds. They are more aggressive and assertive than softer pinks, more blatantly sexual.

**YELLOW: energy and life**

Give any child a piece of paper and a yellow crayon. Immediately there appears a drawing of the sun, complete with little yellow rays sparkling optimistically around a big vibrant yellow circle. Child and adult alike feel cheered and comforted when enveloped in sunshine. We instinctively lift our faces to the sun, just as the buttercups and daffodils do.

From the beginning of time, humans have worshiped the golden glow of the sun. The association of yellow to the sun is universal. For many ancient civilizations, yellow and its glimmering sister of gold were deified and sacred. Because of their proximity to the heavens, these colors signified divine love and enlightened human understanding.

**ORANGE: radiant and hot**

Ask anyone to name the color of a sunset and invariably the answer is “orange.” The meaning of orange is inexorably linked to the sensations of radiant energy, heat and the glowing presence of the setting sun. The link between red and yellow, orange takes its traits from both. It is less passionate and intense than red, incorporating the sunny disposition of yellow.

The brightest tones of orange are seen as gregarious, fun-loving, high-energy. Cool orange simply does not exist. Everything about orange is luminous and hot. It is perceived as the hottest of all colors even more so than red because it takes its heat from two radiant sources, yellow and red.

**BLUE: eternal blue**

Blue is the color of constancy and truth. It is the color of the sky as ephemeral and transparent as it may be, it is always there. Even on a cloudy or gray day there is the hope that the clarity of azure blue will eventually break through. The true blue of the daylight sky is associated with the continuity of yet another day, dependable and consoling. Survival was difficult in primitive times, so the dawning of a new day, in any shade of blue, must have been comforting.

Because of the enormous expanse of sky, we see blue as distant and receding into outer space. It suggests the ancient past or faraway future. As Goethe wrote in his Theory of Colors:

A blue surface seems to return from us . . . but as we readily follow an agreeable object that flies from us, so we love to contemplate blue, not because it advances to us, but because it draws us after it.
In fact, gazing at the blue sky brings a sense of peace and tranquility to the human spirit. It is imprinted in our psyches as a retiring, quiescent color.

**GREEN: deep forests and wide meadows**

For most people a green path leads inevitably to thoughts of nature. Mother Nature painted more green on earth than any other color. It is the hue of foliage, grass, and growing plants; of graceful sheltering trees, dappled meadows and clinging vines; the shade of forest and jungle. Green is so pervasive in nature that we never question it as a background for all other surrounding colors.

Contrasting with purple pansies, pink azaleas, yellow daylilies, orange marigolds or red tulips (and any other color under the sun), leafy foliage greens are truly nature’s perfect neutral.

While most greens emanate from the earth, blue-greens are associated with the sea; calm, spacious, and cool. Teal green, a variation of blue-green, is seen as sophisticated and upscale, as are the bluer versions of teal and teal blue. When deep blue is added to green, the shade becomes more serious and pensive.

**PURPLE: passion and magic**

The purple family—the most enigmatic of all colors—is a combination of the excitement of red and the tranquility of blue, the marriage of two diametrically opposed emotions. A critical balancing act always exists: which emotion takes the lead?

From passionate red-violets to strong, silent indigo purples, this is the rainbow's most complex color and so are the people who prefer it: artists, mystics, performers, designers, widely (and often wildly) divergent types who have one thing in common—they are nonconformists (or longing to be!).

It is no wonder that highly creative artistic types (as well as eccentrics) have a predilection for purple. They enjoy the uniqueness inherent in this extraordinary hue.

**BROWN: earthy and real**

Brown is the color of hearth and home—of dried herbs and stone-ground bread and freshly baked cookies. It represents all of the nurturing, life-sustaining, down-to-earth qualities of terra firma, the very shade of earth itself. Just as in the sturdy oak, brown represents roots, a steady, stable source of security, comfort, and normalcy.

It is the fertile soil that sustains growth and nourishment; the color of plowed earth, buckskin and rawhide, weathered
redwood, bison and mustang, frontier land—rugged and outdoorsy. It is pinecone and bracken, chipmunk and acorn, beaver and doe, and all other manner of woodland inhabitants. Even in its more sumptuous state of fine suede and supple kid leather, brown is considered a classic shade of solid substance.

**BLACK: sleek and sophisticated**

To some, it is sinister and eerie; to others, the height of sophistication. In fact, no other color evokes such a variety of feelings. At various times it is described as foreboding and funereal; magical or mysterious; suave, sexy, or sober; powerful or pretentious; practical yet glamorous, but always it is a presence not to be ignored.

Black has come to denote great chic as well as the ultimate in elegance and drama on the body as well as in the home. It also signifies solid, basic strength a deep abiding powerful presence.

**Gray: quiet gray**

Grays represent solid strength and longevity, an association stemming from the color of granite and gravel, stone, slate and rock; of ancient monuments, pillars, and temples that have withstood the ravages of time and technology. Tough modern cities are thought of as gray cement and concrete, silvery-steel, metallic aluminum.

Gray is the color of intellect. It is thoughtful, contemplative, the gray matter of brain and mind; a striving for truth, knowledge, and wisdom.

Medium grays are resolute, dignified, subtle, conservative: the understated authority of the man (or woman) in the gray flannel suit. Gray is the reasonable color of compromise, when extremes of black and white are tempered to “shades of gray.”

For many, gray inevitably reminds us of days when we were imprisoned indoors standing with our noses pressed against wet window panes, looking out at leaden skies waiting for the gray day to disappear. Those early gray childhood memories survive in our psyches to influence our attitudes forever. As a result, very few people choose gray as a favorite shade.

**White: clean and pure**

White. The purest of the pure. White is unsullied, divine, pristine.

There is an innocence to white, a christening-dress kind of chasteness, an unsullied childlike naivete. It is traditionally the color of babies or brides. White can mean complete and absolute minimalism “whiting out” the environment so that there is a totally blank canvas. In pigment or dye form, white is referred to as achromatic, which literally means “without color.” But if we think in terms of light, white contains all color.
Effective Messaging

Develop key messages to communicate about your library. Some examples of messages that we have learned have the greatest resonance with audiences for libraries include:

- Libraries are a democracy’s best-kept promise. They provide “information for all.”
- Libraries are unique in this information age.
- Information on nearly anything can be accessed in-person and also online.
- Librarians are information experts who can quickly help patrons zero-in on what they need.
- The library is an access point for information both as a building and as an online resource. The library is an important part of our information age and serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas delivered through a diverse collection of speakers, exhibits and programs that spark exploration and dialogue.
- Libraries are community and cultural centers.
- People love books and they want to know that their library invests in books. Talk about them.
- Libraries are a source of lifelong learning, social interaction and entertainment.
- Libraries serve people from early childhood through their senior years.
- Libraries are an important resource in early childhood development.
- Libraries support people through school, during their search for a job, through parenting, careers and retirement.

EXERCISE

Now that you’ve read the article on color, take a moment and look at the picture of the Golden Gate Bridge to the left.

Once you’ve looked at this picture, compare it to the picture at the beginning of the article.

How do you feel looking at this picture, compared to the first picture?

Just something to think about.
Who is your Target Audience?

Probably one of the most important ingredients of a marketing campaign is knowing who your target audience is, because without that clear focus, your message will become cluttered and forgotten about.

Target audiences are called by many names including key audiences and target markets. While the names can be different, the concept is pretty much the same, what is the audience that you want your message to come across to.

Coming in all shapes and sizes, target audiences can be whatever they are molded to become. For example, perhaps there is a new housing community that is being built within your city and you want to let everyone who is in that neighborhood about the library. Your target audience would then become all residents within that new community. Once you’ve focused in on who your target audience is, you can then decide some of the basics on how you are going to get the attention of your target audience. Maybe for the new housing community your library sends a “welcome to the neighborhood” postcard to all the residences in the neighborhood.

When Pierce County Library System developed their 2007 Marketing and Communications plan, one of their key segments of the plan was their Key Audiences/Markets. Their audiences were customers and potential customers with a specific emphasis on: Families with preschool and school-age children; ‘tweens and teens, active older adults and community leaders.

Once Pierce County decided who their target audiences were, they then broke down each group to show the key audience as well as real or perceived values of each specific group. Below is the breakdown of the groups.

**KEY AUDIENCES**
- Families with children, which are key to the cycle of library use:
  - Children, 0-9, with early learning focuses
  - Families new to the area, new homebuyers
  - Extended families, grandparents
- ‘Tweens, children ages 11-14
- Teens
- Active older adults
  - Caregivers
  - Families
  - Older adult organizations
  - Pre-retirees

The real or perceived values for the groups included good quality of life and education for families, peer acceptance and determining life direction, meaning and value for teens and recreation and getting and maintaining good health for the active older adults.

Once you have identified your target audiences, you can move forward onto developing the key messages for your target audience.

In the Marketing section of the toolkit (Section V, starting on page 5), you can find an example of a marketing plan that shows where your target audience fits into the plan.