

# Overcoming the Complex Challenge of Influenza Vaccination Messaging: One Size Does Not Fit All

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Understand the vital difference between believing you will succeed and believing you will succeed *easily*.

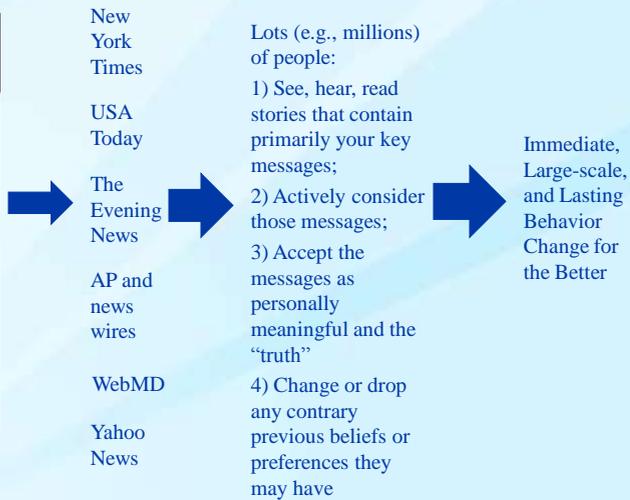
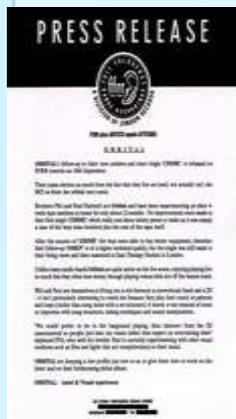


You really need to get this.



Look at this. We should get it.

## Let's issue a press release. . .



## The Competition is Fierce

True or False:

- Eating junk food will lower your IQ.
- Most Americans know what calories are and pay them some attention.
- Bound neutrons pave the way to free ones.
- The majority of Americans are not meeting recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Chocolate is a super fruit.
- The highest rates of physical activity are found in the South.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the leading preventable cause of death, disease, and disability in the US.

## Press Releases on February 7<sup>th</sup> included. . .

- “Junk Food Lowers IQ: New documentation in Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health”
- “Genetics Mean Next to Nothing: It’s Your Lifestyle that Counts,” Journal of Internal Medicine
- “Late Nights up stroke, heart attack risks,” European Health Journal
- “Women are more attracted to men whose feelings are unclear,” Psychological Science
- “Sun Exposure, Vitamin D may lower risk of Multiple Sclerosis,” Neurology
- “Bound Neutrons Pave Way to Free Ones: Scientists Extract Information About Internal Structure of Free Neutrons,” Physical Review Letters.
- “Urine-Sniffing Dogs: Early Detection of Prostate Cancer,” European Urology
- “Oscar win ups divorce risk for best actress, not for best actor: study”

Media coverage is helpful,  
but typical outcome is more like this. . .

Press Release

“Majority of Americans not meeting recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption”

Only 33% of adults eat 2 or more daily servings of fruit and only 27% get the recommended three servings of vegetables.



New York Times  
USA Today  
The Evening News  
AP and news wires  
WebMD  
Yahoo News



1. Lots of people ignore or never attend to.
2. Many see, hear, read stories that contain some of your key messages;
3. Some read or listen to the entire story;
4. A few – usually those who already believe – see the information as relevant or interesting.
5. A few others dismiss as wrong or not relevant.



Hard to discern effect on most; top of mind awareness temporarily increased among a few. More stories follow and push this aside.

Keep in mind that. . .

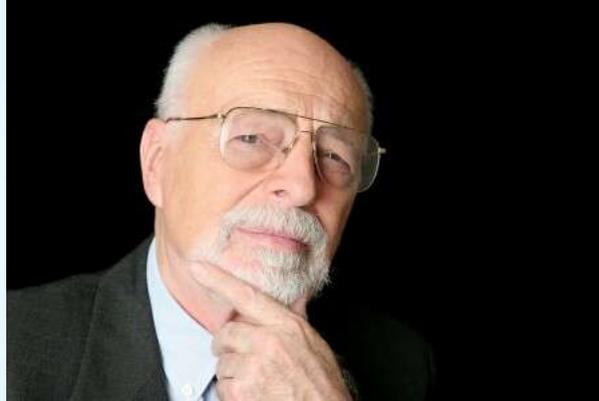
Diversity means messages may need to vary across different groups



People are busy and it's hard to get attention



And if you succeed,  
you may be greeted with skepticism



Such as . . .

- Skepticism about the basis for the recommendation;
- Skepticism about the safety of the vaccine;
- Skepticism about the effectiveness of the vaccine;
- Skepticism about the usefulness or need for the vaccine;
- Skepticism that the benefits are a) worth the trouble and/or b) outweigh the potential risks.

Be mindful – and careful – about  
the assumptions you make about  
your targeted audiences

## How to Lose Weight (Fast)

- **Determine your daily caloric intake.** Losing weight is simply an activity. Lower your calories intake without starving. To win the battle, know how many calories you consume in a day
- Research shows that people who track calories lose weight twice as much as those who don't.

## Calories May Count but Most People Aren't Counting Them

Recent national (May 2011) survey found:

- ❑ Only 9 percent of people in US can accurately estimate the number of calories they should eat in a day;
- ❑ Only 9 percent keep track of calories;
- ❑ Bottomline: Few Americans count calories. The majority don't know how and most don't care.

## Experts vs. Public – Flu Vaccination

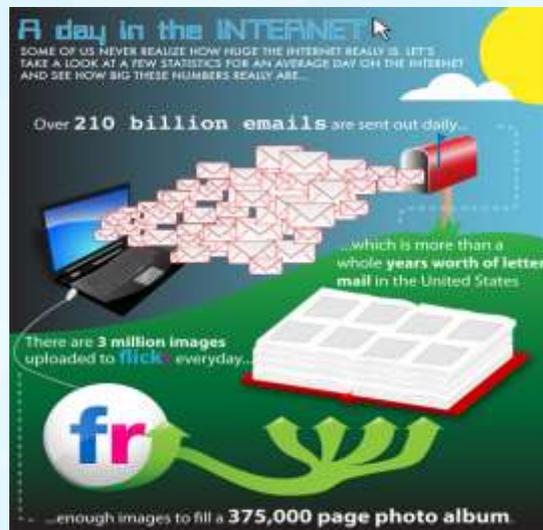
### Scientists and Health Experts

- Influenza is a serious health threat
- Influenza vaccination is an important way to protect yourself from flu
- When well matched, flu vaccine helps protect 6-7 out of 10 people from flu.
- Flu vaccine is the best protection you can get from flu.
- Disease bad, vaccine good.
- Universal recommendation makes things easier.
- People will like having more vaccine options.

### Public, patients, parents

- Depends; some agree, others see influenza as a manageable illness
- Depends; some agree, others see vaccine as unnecessary or not helpful.
- For some, that's a significant benefit, for others, not so much.
- For some, yes. For others, other steps are just as or more helpful. For others, effective treatments are available.
- For some, yes. For others, disease manageable or not severe, vaccine may be good, but it's not needed.
- Why is it now recommended that I get a influenza vaccination?
- Why so many options? Which is best? Which is most effective?

Be mindful of the assumptions you make about the media (e.g., “We can use social media – it’s not very expensive and everyone is using it.”)





## Influenza Vaccination-related Messages and Messaging



"EACH OF YOU HAS BEEN GIVEN A SIMPLE, YET POWERFUL TOOL..."

## Upcoming Flu Season

- Who needs to get vaccinated and why?
- How effective is the influenza vaccine?
  - For (pick a group)
  - Each type of vaccine (and pick a group)
- Do I need to get vaccinated if I got vaccinated in 2010-11 (i.e., the vaccine is the same)? Why?
- Why is 2009 H1N1 in the vaccine again?
- When should I get vaccinated? Why?
- Which vaccine is best? Which vaccine is best for (pick a group)?
- Influenza disease

## Put Yourself in Your Audience's Shoes



Safe, Effective, Will Protect Me, Helpful, Easy to Do, Sensible

Which of the following factors would make you more likely to get a flu vaccination?

Vaccines were Free (%)	Statistics showing Safety (%)	Statistics showing Effectiveness (%)	News of Spreading Flu (%)	News of Illness or Death (%)	Statistics Showing Self-Vaccination Protects Others (%)
66	71	74	76	82	82

All Adults (18 + years)

August 2010 National Flu Survey

## Effective Messaging

- Empathy
- Acknowledge Uncertainty
- Acknowledge inconsistencies, differences among experts
- Share dilemmas / Acknowledge shortcomings
- Provide helpful context through meaningful examples and analogies
- Use words and terms that your target audience uses and understands

## Trust the Public with More of the Truth

(Peter Sandman, 2009)

“Public health agencies increasingly face a lot of public outrage and mistrust as well. The outrage and mistrust result from a long history of “shaping” the truth – not quite lying, but working hard to emphasize the parts of the truth that will get people to do what the agency wants them to do (for their own good).”

## (Potential) Core Message Themes

- Influenza is an illness worth trying to prevent; it makes you feel bad and miserable for days. Some people experience very severe illness.
- Influenza is unpredictable – and that includes being unable to know whether you’ll get it or how sick you’ll become.
- We wish the vaccine was more effective – but it’s the best step one can take to protect themselves from flu.
- It’s a simple, safe, and easy step to take and a sensible thing to do.

## Achieving Communication Success is Hard

- Relevance -- compelling, interesting content/stories
  - Audience focused or centered
  - Personalization, customization, tailoring
  - Targeting
- Realistic expectations
  - What the desired outcome?
  - Can your plans (e.g., a news story) achieve the desired outcome?
- Repetition of core themes
- Resources
- Risk

## And efforts need to be ongoing

- Be mindful of words that sound like good things (e.g., “new,” “novel,” “intradermal,” “new intradermal”)
- Audiences are fluid and dynamic
- Flu vaccines are moving from a “commodity” to a set of products with characteristics that bring different advantages
- Success happens incrementally

THANKS