

Effective Communication Development Requires the Right Research

While substance, style, arrangement and delivery are crucial to the successful communication of your message, the right research is the first step of any effective communication effort. To develop the most effective message, you must first “*get inside the audiences head*” to understand:

- Not simply who they are (for example, demographically, attitudinally and behaviorally) but *what motivates* them?
 - That is, *why* do people *choose* one decision (e.g., product, brand, or course of action) over another?
 - What is the *relative importance* of the product/service/brand attributes/benefits that cause them to choose one competing alternative over another?
- How your competitive offering *compares* to competitive offerings on those important decision criteria (i.e., what are your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)?
- Of all the things you *could* say, which ones *should* you say that will be most effective and maximize your success?
- What *language* (words, phrases) and *symbols* they use when talking about what motivates them?
 - Interviewing audience members to learn what words and symbols they use in a motivating context is the only way to “get inside their heads” to see what motivates them.
 - Your communication task is to communicate *your ideas* in the words/phrases/symbols used by the audience to minimize the loss of communication in the translation between the sender and the receiver of the message.

Finally, you need to understand, how to synthesize the above information into an effective communication strategy, based on experience and knowledge of theory about how communication works.

In research, our *unique selling proposition* is that we not only know how to design and conduct advanced, sophisticated research, we have the experience to know how to apply it strategically to develop winning communication strategies. Similar research core competencies apply to both *organizations* (for either external marketing, public relations, sales, fundraising, internal employee communication or training) and *individuals* (business people or others who need coaching).