COMMUNICATING THE PROMISE
DEVELOPING A COMPELLING MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

JANUARY 11, 2018

VOX GLOBAL

OUR COMMUNICATIONS ROADMAP

BUILDING A MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

What is a message framework? Why do we need one? What does a good framework look like?

GETTING TO KNOW OUR AUDIENCES

Who are our core audiences? How can we best reach them? Who are our most compelling messengers?

MASTERING MESSAGING

How do we use our message framework? How can we stay on message? What are our next steps?

A MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

What it is, and why we need it.

BUILDING YOUR MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

A **message framework** is the foundation of your communications strategy. Everything you create should map back to this messaging – communicating your most important ideas. Components of effective messages include:

MOST IMPORTANT IDEAS

A solid message framework communicates your most important ideas in 1-2 sentences.

UNDERSTANDABLE & MEMORABLE

Messages must be easy to understand and easy for audiences to remember.

RELEVANCE TO DISCOURSE

Effective messages reflect realities of public opinion and perception, and aim to shift them.

AUDIENCE-FOCUSED

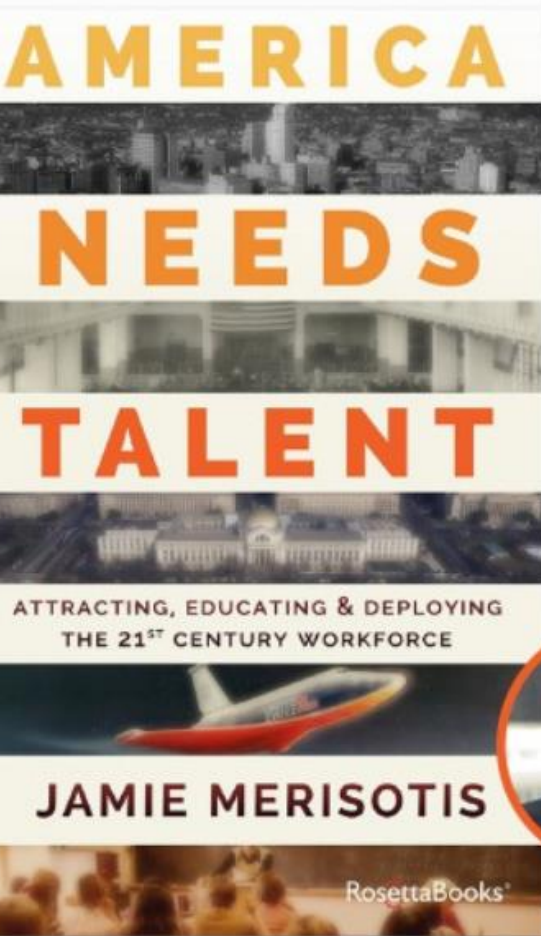And they are hyper-focused on the audiences that matter most.

WHAT MAKES FOR STRONG MESSAGING?

Effective messaging inspires, persuades, motivates and ultimately makes audiences want to act on your behalf.

Smart messaging is:

- Relevant

- Straightforward

- Delivered consistently

MESSAGE FRAMEWORK EXAMPLE

- The 20th century was the Great American Century because our nation developed the talent it needed for people and society to prosper.

- America has lost this can-do spirit, and we risk losing about $7 trillion annually if we don't focus aggressively on attracting, developing and deploying talent.

- *America Needs Talent* offers five ways that government, the private sector, education, civic leaders and individuals can grow the nation's talent.

OUR PROCESS

What we need to build an effective, state-specific message framework.

BASED IN STATE-SPECIFIC INSIGHTS
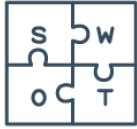
S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats does our state's Adult Promise program possess and/or face?

KEY AUDIENCES, INFLUENCERS & MESSENGERS

Who are our *most important* audiences? How do we prioritize them? And which voices – internal or external – are most likely to be compelling in reaching them?

PERSONA DEVELOPMENT

What does the composite sketch of our core audience look like? What do we know about them and what motivates them?

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Before developing a framework of key messages and supporting proof points, your S.W.O.T. analysis can provide critical information, including:

- What success (at this stage) do you want to amplify?

- What pitfalls do you need to avoid?

- What do you anticipate re. criticism or arguments against your efforts?

- What outside opportunities do you want to capitalize on and how would you prioritize them?

AUDIENCE & MESSENGER MAPPING

To ensure communications efforts target, reach and engage the right groups, when mapping audiences and messengers, ask:

- Who needs to be moved on the issue?

- Who influences them?

- Who are the natural networks of stakeholders to engage?

- Who are the most compelling spokespeople for our effort?

PERSONA DEVELOPMENT

To ensure messages resonate with your core audience groups, consider:

- Key demographic information: Age, gender, race, level of education, location, family structure

- Employment: Occupation, job roles, industry, salary/wages, advancement opportunity

- Goals and challenges

- Values and fears

- News sources

- Personality traits

- Consumer insights

ON MESSAGE

Using your message framework to drive buy-in, awareness and positive outcomes.

MESSAGES THAT STICK: KEY COMPONENTS

COMPREHENSION

Write simply and concisely (i.e. the way you talk). Avoid jargon, flowery language and fluff. Be precise and action-oriented.

CONNECTION

Solve your audiences' problems or appeal to their values. Show your audiences that you understand their goals and their challenges while focusing on solutions.

CREDIBILITY

Messengers must be believable and authentic – and it's not always the highest ranking official in the room.

CONTAGIOUSNESS

The best messages can be shared easily by others. The more people who share your message, the wider your influence.

YOU WILL GET TIRED OF YOUR MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

(If you're doing it right.)

CORE COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS

OWNED CHANNELS

A digital home is essential. It provides a single source of truth for all stakeholders seeking to learn more about your Adult Promise program and why it's needed to advance attainment in your state.

MEDIA RELATIONS

Traditional media relations remains equally essential. Op-eds and letters to the editor provide opportunities for thought leadership. Briefings with editorial boards / editors help make the case for this program.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Organic and paid social – can amplify your message and help you reach hyper-specific audiences on the platforms where they are most active.

THIRD-PARTY OUTREACH

And consensus-driven partnerships can lend needed credibility or reach audiences.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

Tomorrow's session is the first step in building the message framework for your state's Adult Promise program and the communications plan that will support it. You'll walk away with draft, top-line messages that will inform the way you talk about your Adult Promise program with adult learners and other audiences that matter.