

Communicating (your science)

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BLUF:

**If you don't tell your story
someone else (usually far less
qualified) will (or will try to).**



GOALS to build long-term
trust in the scientific community

GOALS to ensure a strong
role for science in society

GOALS that feel unnatural



Demonstrate Caring

*If I feel you care
then I believe you
will look out for me.*

*Why do you do
what you do?*

**Probably doesn't hurt to let people know
scientists care.**



Demonstrate Openness

People don't like when they feel someone is hiding something.

Scientists need to recognize people want openness.

Find ways to talk about the things you do and voluntarily open yourselves to:

- **scrutiny**
- **starting the discussion**
- **being part of the conversation**



Learn what the public thinks

We the People

People want a voice
in things that affect
them.

People believe science
often affects them by
creating new threats to
them and their families.

Scientists need to show they are actively
listening...really listening.



Foster sense of shared identity

Most people don't have advanced degrees.



People develop stereotypes for people outside their social groups.

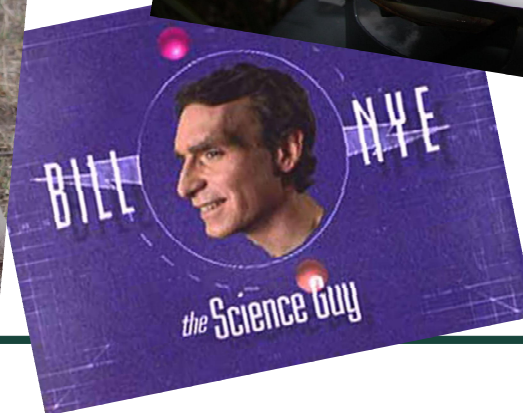


Scientists can help by talking about concerns everyone shares (e.g. community and family).



Getting people excited

Science can be fun and interesting. Its worth sharing that excitement.



Contributing to the debate

There are real issues in the world that need input from scientists.

**The public wants
(needs?) scientists to
weigh in.**

The key is doing so in a way that demonstrates:

- **Caring**
- **Openness**
- **Willingness to listen**



Helping frame the debate

Framing: to suggest to people they may want to think about an issue in a certain way.



The key is to pick frames that are:

- **Honest**
- **Powerful**



Helping frame the debate (cont.)

“...many scientists retain the well-intentioned belief that, if laypeople better understood technical complexities from news coverage, their viewpoints would be more like scientists’, and controversy would subside.”

-- Nisbet, M.C., and Mooney, C. Framing Science. *Science*, 56 (2007); Vol. 316.



Helping frame the debate (cont.)

“In reality, citizens do not use news media as scientists assume.”(1)

Research shows:

- **People are rarely well enough informed or motivated to weigh competing ideas and arguments.**
- **Faced with daily torrent of news, people use their value predispositions (e.g. political or religious beliefs) as perceptual screens, selecting news outlets and websites whose outlooks match their own (2).**
- **Such screening reduces the choices of what to pay attention to and accept as valid (3).**

1. Nisbet, M.C., and Mooney, C. Framing Science. *Science*, 56 (2007); Vol. 316.
2. Popkin, S.L., *The Reasoning Voter* (Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991).
3. Zaller, J., *Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge Univ. Press, New York, 1992).



Helping frame the debate (cont.)

“...as unnatural as it might feel, in many cases, scientists should strategically avoid emphasizing the technical details of science when trying to defend it.”

-- Nisbet, M.C., and Mooney, C. Framing Science. *Science*, 56 (2007); Vol. 316.



CABS can help!



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