

Moving the Needle Through Messaging and Media

Communicating what you care about and why it matters

What We Will Cover in this Section

1. What is a primary message?
1. What is “bridging” and how can I use it?
1. How can I build strong secondary messages?
1. How can I work with journalists to secure and support positive news coverage?

Primary Messages

What is a Primary Message?

- **A concise, values-based anchor**
 - What do we value?
 - Why are we valuable?
- **A clarifying lens**
 - What is a frame of reference for everything we do or say?
- **A true compass**
 - How can we make decisions about what to pursue

Why Do I Need a Primary Message?

1. Your primary message is the foundation of everything you say, but also, everything you do.
1. Your primary message keeps you anchored. Without a clear, authentic, disciplined message, even the best idea or effort is going to get hammered.

Elements of a Good Primary Message

- Frame the problem
- Propose a value or solution
- Motivate your audience:
 - Appeal to the heart, not just the head
 - Why are you trying to solve this problem? (Dig deep...why are YOU *really* trying to solve this problem?)

Let's Take A Primary Message Quiz!

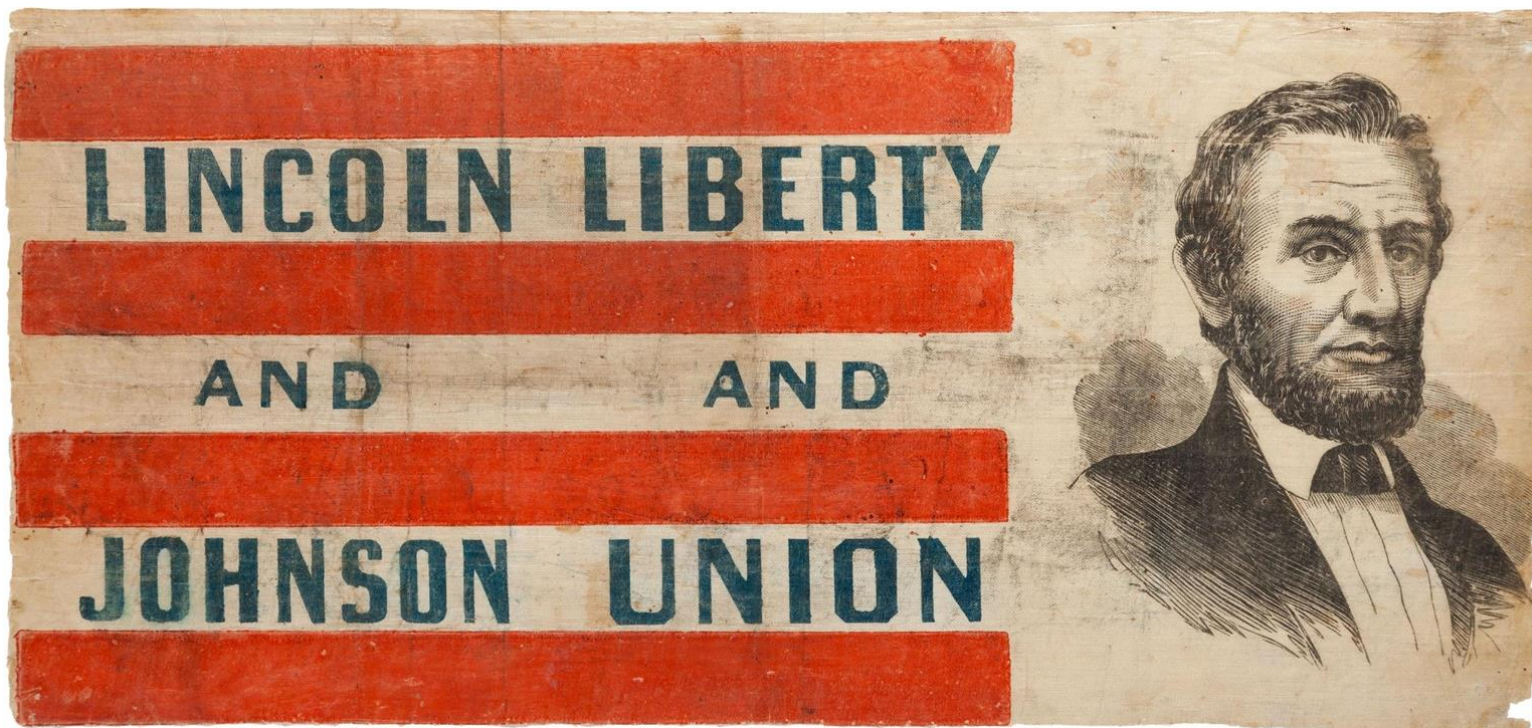
“Change We Can Believe In”



“It’s the Economy, Stupid!”



“Don’t Change Horses in Midstream.”



Reflection

- What do we notice about these messages?
- What other strong messages can you think of?
From work or otherwise?

Big Skill: Bridging

Bridging: Your Message, Your Island



A message is like a beautiful, tropical island.

Questions and inquiries are like pirate ships carrying you out to sea.

Don't try to get back on the pirate ship! **Just get back to your island!**

Passing The Bridging Test

- Bridging is the technical term for “swimming back to your island.” It’s a practical way to stay focused on your message in any context.
- The Bridging Test
 - If you can’t bridge back to your message in (almost) every situation, it is not yet basic or foundational enough. Keep distilling!
 - Try using the word “because” until you can’t distill anymore

Let's Practice Bridging

Phrases to try:

- "I'm so glad you brought that up..."
- "It really comes down to _____."
- "If you remember one thing I say, let it be _____."
- "Some people say _____, but we think that _____."

“You Know...”



Secondary Messaging

What is a Secondary Message?

A supporting argument designed to bolster your primary message or goal with a specific audience or market

A coalition-based strategy for achieving your goals by helping unlikely allies achieve theirs

Why Do I Need Secondary Messages?

1. Achieving your goal will require action from multiple stakeholders
1. Not all stakeholders value the same things
1. Waste no will!

Elements of a Good Secondary Message

- Targeted to a specific person or group
- Appeals to a key motivation of that person or group
- Calls for a specific action or behavior
- Does not require alignment with your primary message

Stakeholder Analysis: Hillary 2016

Faction	Leader	Contributor	Gatekeeper	Adversary	Bystander
Hillary Clinton	X				
Barack Obama		X			
Tim Kaine		X			
Bernie Sanders			X		
Donald Trump				X	
Facts					X

Building Secondary Messaging

Stakeholder	Type	What I Need Them to Do	WIIFM?	Secondary Message
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Party Guests



Working with Media

Building Media Relationships



Now that you've got a clear message strategy, you're ready to build relationships with media:

Research

Relationship

Pitch

Support

Researching Journalists

- Use free tools like Google News to find reporters who have already covered your issue
- Pursue relationships, not just stories
- When journalists decline, ask if they have a colleague who would be a better fit

Relationship Building

- Invite journalists to have coffee with you or your executive director
 - Update them on your work and the main challenges you are facing
 - At first, suggest and support stories based on where they express interest
 - Reach back out every 6 months or so to update and warm up the relationship

Pitching

- Keep your pitch simple...20 seconds max!
- Stick to the NEWS!
 - Issues, opinions or ideas are not pitch-worthy
 - Make sure you're ready to tell your target about something that is actually happening
- Call or email between 10 and 11am. NEVER call after 2pm!

Supporting a Story

- Do whatever you can to minimize work for the journalist
 - Gather stories or characters in advance
 - Write releases that contain all the key facts required for a story
 - If a journalist asks for a fact, source or citation, find it for them. Don't make them do it!

GROUP EXERCISE: Developing Your Pitch Plans

As a group, choose a real life event or news item from a group member's real work:

Research and identify two journalists to target

Develop a short, 20-second pitch

Brainstorm a list of advance information and assets you will prepare in advance for your targets

Thank you!