Communicating about Immigration in Turbulent Times

MIRA Conference
November 12, 2019
Christina Pope
Welcome & Overview
Today’s Goals

- Learn some rules of the road for messaging

- Walk away with new perspectives, strategies, and fundamentals of strong messaging
Communication & Message Framing
Assessing Communications

• Think about what you read, hear, or see in the media now about immigrants.

• What seems to be working in communications, and what isn’t?

• What would you like to read, hear, or see more of?
Framing
Confirmation Bias

"I've heard the rhetoric from both sides... time to do my own research on the real truth."

Googie

*hotly debated topic*

Found 80,000 results.

**Literally the first link that agrees with what you already believe**

Completely supports your viewpoint without challenging it in any way

Another link

Don't worry about this one.

...jackpot
Complex and conflicting views

Nation of immigrants & chaos

People hold multiple cultural views on social issues
The Alienated Stranger
Shifting the frame
Rules of the Road
1. Know Your Audience*

*your audience isn’t you

Image credit: The Next Silicon Valley
Unsure
The ambivalent middle 60%
2. Communication starts with listening

What *values* does the audience care about, and where can you identify common ground and shared benefit?
3. Lead with a unifying message based on shared values
Value: Community
Values: Faith, Family

Like you, we are a people of faith and we want a better future for our children.

welcomingtn.org

We love America, and we’re proud to call Shelbyville home.
Values: Pragmatism, Neighborliness

When Michigan welcomes immigrants, Michigan thrives.
Values: Neighborliness

Nebraska is Home

Welcoming Colorado
Framing
COMPETITIVE EDGE

Competing in a twenty-first century economy means taking full advantage of our most important resource—our people. And that means welcoming the new Americans who are starting businesses, committing to our community, and helping build a stronger local economy.

Communities across the country and around the world are in a race to the top to attract the human capital that will allow them to thrive in a global economy. Becoming a more welcoming place for immigrants gives us a leg up in that competition and helps us retain talented people of all backgrounds.
We all crave a sense of belonging and connection – to one another and to the places we call home. With you, I am reminded that I am not alone. With me, you are not alone. Together, we can re-imagine what it means to be connected. Because no matter who you are, we’re in this journey of life together.
You look at fire departments in many major cities, and you’ll see what America is increasingly looking like in the 21st century: whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians working together.

When you are fighting a blazing fire, you trust that your brother or sister has your back. You are not thinking about the color of their skin or where they are from. You are focused on one thing—protecting lives.

What binds together a diverse fire department is what it takes to bind together a diverse society—shared values and goals. But that doesn’t mean asking people to give up what they value about their heritage. Our cultures and heritage make each of us unique. Those things don’t take away from who we are as Americans. They add to it.

By giving each person an equal opportunity to contribute, it makes the entire team stronger. It makes America stronger.
4. Don’t try to fight FEAR with FACTS
5. Balance Values, Stories, and Facts

Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio 2015 Report
6. Communicate through credible spokespeople

“In this country, values, integrity, honesty and hard work pay off every time. Sharpen your pencil; be willing to learn new things and try new experiences and the skies are wide open for you.”

Bahjat Shariff, Panera Bread / Howley Bread Group
7. Remember: Don’t Reinforce, Replace
8. Don’t shy away from talking about race and racism
Remember to avoid common pitfalls and...

• Be inclusive in identifying the “win.”

• Avoid using dividing language (“good/bad” immigrants).
Reflection and Questions
Get Involved

**BECOME A MEMBER**
Municipal governments and nonprofits can join our network to make their communities more inclusive.

**PARTICIPATE IN WELCOMING WEEK**
Learn more about hosting or participating in an event in your community.

**MAKE A DONATION**
Help make our nation more welcoming to immigrants, one community at a time.

**LEARN**
Build your communities capacity and skills through our Welcoming Institute
2020 WELCOMING INTERACTIVE CHARLOTTE, NC JUNE 3-5

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES STRONG ECONOMIES
Welcoming Week
Building a Nation of Neighbors
Starts Locally, With You

September 11-20, 2020
Resources

- Welcoming Economies Playbook
- Community Planning Process Guide
- America Needs All of Us
- welcomingamerica.org
KEEP UP WITH WELCOMING AMERICA

WelcomingAmerica.org

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