Identifying the messenger and media
Finding the Right Messenger

What qualities make for a good messenger?
- Trusted
- Chatty/extroverted
- Popular
- Well connected (with the target audience)
- “PLU”
- Congruent with the frame
- Surprising source
- ...

The story of the hairdressers
Trust in Information Sources

Figure 35: Trust in scientists as sources of global warming information

How much do you trust or distrust the following as a source of information about global warming?
• Scientists

Figure 36: Trust in the mainstream news media as sources of global warming information

How much do you trust or distrust the following as a source of information about global warming?
• The mainstream news media

Source: Leiserowitz et al. (2009, 2010)
Media use and effects

- People typically choose media that speaks to their values
- The “Daily Show Effect” (Baumgartner et al. 2007)
  - Soft news contributes to democratic citizenship in America by reaching out to the inattentive public
  - Viewers feel more informed about the political system
  - Viewers feel more cynical about it, more critical of political institutions, leaders
- The “Glen Beck/Rush Limbaugh/Fox News Effect” (evident in longitudinal polling data)
  - Megaphone for the skeptical/contrarians
  - Further polarization
  - No increase in factual knowledge; many factual errors
What (Mass)Media Are Good For

- Economies of scale to reach many (not necessarily masses) and quickly
- Raise issues on the public and political agenda
- Making it (more) “real”:
  - Visualization
  - Dramatization (but focus on extremes!)
  - Personal stories (immediate, personal, relevant, intuitive)
  - Typically, morally clean and easy, less demanding
BUT...

Media-ted (mass)communication

- Does not provide “retail” communication – tailored to audience needs
- Generally less or not successful at
  - engaging on issues more deeply
  - direct persuasion
  - fostering (habitual) behavior change
  - providing opportunities for dialogue, Q&A, deepening into issues, or resolving conflicts
- Most people “consume news on the side”
  - Peripheral information processing
The Media Industry Is Changing!

- Traditional media are largely a for-profit industry, not an educational institution
- Techno-cultural changes and economic realities
  - From “broadcasting” to “narrowcasting”
  - Downsizing due to revenue loss
  - Focus on what “sells” (extreme events, human interest stories, controversies)
  - Rise of Internet and the explosion of cheaper, flexible interactive media
  - Move to edu-tainment
  - Rapid-fire, sound-bite, non-stop 24-hour reporting
- Rise of social media – multiplicity of “megaphones”
- Common reporting norms
Growing Use of New & Social Media
Audiences differ in media use
Information uptake is incidental most of the time
Exploit and create opportunities of active, free-choice learning
Use full range of media to achieve broad and repeated communication
Two-step communication is critical
Partnerships
Why Dialogue?

- Mass /one-way communication is not enough, often detrimental (reinforcing old beliefs)
- Need for social support
- Need for safe forums for deeper social engagement, ongoing dialogue, and social accountability
- Deliberation and dialogue help overcome differences, build trust, increase openness to different opinions & risk information
Group Exercise 6: Identify the messenger and the medium

- **Brainstorm messengers**
  - Who would be most trusted by the target audience?
  - If you can’t reach the audience well directly, who could?
  - Who has influence on your ultimate target audience?

- **Brainstorm channels or media**
  - What media does your target audience use (how? how often? for what purposes?)
  - Are there more than one or two ways to reach the audience?
  - Explore all media (written, audio, graphic) and channels (TV, radio, print, web/internet, social/interactive tools)
Communicating Uncertainty & Dealing with Skeptics and Contrarians
Familiar uncertainties

The performance of the stock market (in constant 2000 US$)

Source: http://www.safehaven.com/article/68/secular-market-trends

© 2011 - Training slides developed by Susanne C. Moser, Ph.D., all rights reserved
... and not so familiar uncertainties

Global Temperatures

Temperature Anomaly (°C)

-0.4 -0.2 0 0.2 0.4 0.6

1880 1900 1920 1940 1960 1980 2000

Annual Average
Five Year Average

Source: GISS

© 2011 - Training slides developed by Susanne C. Moser, Ph.D., all rights reserved
Some tips about communicating uncertainty

**Do’s**
- Lead with certainty and confident knowledge
- Translate scientific jargon into “common” uncertainty language
  - Odds (9 out of 10) and %
  - Use metaphors, comparisons with everyday experiences
- Explain sources of uncertainty
- Put climate uncertainty in context of other uncertain issues

**Don’ts**
- Don’t start out with all the things we don’t know yet
- Don’t hide and acknowledge what is less certain
- Don’t ever oversell certainty (in words or graphics)
- Don’t assume people mean the same as you do by qualitative uncertainty language (e.g., un/likely)
Many are skeptical, not all are contrarians!

- Uncertainty invites extreme interpretations
- Being skeptical:
  - The hallmark of science
  - For most people an expected reaction to threatening information
    - Remember the insights from cultural cognition
- Being contrarian:
  - Active pursuit of spreading disinformation, trying to confuse others, obstruct facts...
The typical flow of arguments

- Climate change [or: fill in the blank] is not happening
  - Inadequate evidence (e.g., unreliable data), contradictory evidence (e.g., today’s weather), no consensus

- Even if it’s happening, we don't know why it's happening
  - Models don't work, prediction is impossible (e.g., can’t even be sure about tomorrow’s weather), we can’t be sure

- Even if it’s happening, it’s due to natural causes
  - It happened before, it’s just natural cycles, it’s not caused by CO2

- Even if it’s happening and we caused it, climate change will not be (as) bad (as they say)
  - The effects are good (e.g., what’s wrong with warmer weather?), effects are small

- Even if it’s happening, human-caused, and maybe even bad for us, there is nothing we can do about it
  - It’s too late, it’s someone else’s problem (e.g., China is the biggest emitter), it’s going to ruin our economy
Dealing with contrarian arguments

- **Don’ts:**
  - No name-calling
  - No shouting match
  - No arguing (tit for tat)

- **Dos:**
  - Correct the worst mistakes and misstatements but don’t get in a tit-for-tat
  - Get back to people with answers if you don’t know it
  - Expose the argument for what it is: not over science but values
  - Identify the “stage of denial” (not out loud)
  - De-escalate, de-polarize, affirm sense of self
  - Be the “friendly” communicator
  - Proactively frame the issue or reframe the debate, rather than argue within the contrarian frame
Exercise 7: Dealing with skeptics & contrarians

- Get in Pairs
  - Read skeptical/contrarian arguments
  - Identify “stage of denial”
  - Practice a reply
    - Attempt to correct the misstatement (if you know)
    - Affirm identity/sense of self of audience
    - Reframe the issue
    - Deliver your key message

Practice: A – T – M
Powerful Communication: Your Strategies
What Makes These Empowering?

- If it can happen in Kansas...
  
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzTpCUYEt5k&feature=player_embedded

- ...it can happen around the world!
  
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Mxjbip6yo4&feature=player_embedded
Empowerment – What Does It Mean?

- Attaining the power to make choices
- A form of emancipatory change
- Growing or gaining the capacity to affect the outcome
- What kind of power?
  - Power over (influence, coerce)
  - Power to (enabled, increased capacity)
  - Power with (solidarity, strength in numbers)
  - Power from within (confidence, self-esteem)

Source: Moser, in press
What empowers?

- Solutions
- Sense of competency
- Practical help, skills, confidence, intentions
- Sense of the collective
- Public commitments
- Visibility for leadership, accomplishment
- Intrinsic motivations
  (see next slide)
The deep motivations

The sources of our deepest motivation:

- **Autonomy**
  - Self-direction, freedom to do it your way, do what you really want to do

- **Mastery**
  - Urge to excel (or get better) at something

- **Purpose**
  - Need for meaning

Final Exercise:
Present A Powerful Strategy

- Present your strategy – with gusto
  - Add “juice” to your communication?
    - What would make it more attractive, memorable, engaging?
    - What would add accountability, visibility, a sense of responsibility for getting the action/change done, for each other, the community, the environment, future generations?
  - How can you tap into deep values and motivations?
  - How can you entice people to become their best selves?
  - What would make them be want to be part of the solution?

- Identify an engaging speaker in your group
- Aim for a 2-min presentation
Resources Galore!!!

- Communication
  - Selected writings, strategies
  - Polling data sources
  - Tools
  - Key resources
  - Dealing with skepticism and denial
- Behavior change
- Communicating impacts and adaptation
- Adaptation science & planning
Before you go...

I’d love your feedback!

For more info on communication, engagement, and adaptation:

Susi Moser
promundi@susannemoser.com
Thank you!