



Communicating for Climate Action

[Lab team member name here]
Climate Advocacy Lab

Contextualizing your communications work



Your campaign **narrative** articulates an inspiring, culturally-compelling vision for the world you are working to bring into being...



... Composed of a series of **stories** that show how if we work strategically and collectively, we can achieve that vision...



... Told and re-emphasized through your **communication strategy**, which considers **messages, messengers, and mode of delivery.**



Articulate an inspiring, visionary narrative



- What is the world you are working to bring into being? What will it take for us to get there?
- Who are heroes, villains, and impacted communities?
- What supporting images or other media would be useful to help show (not just tell folks about) your vision?



Reading “A Message from the Future”

“What if we actually pulled off a Green New Deal? What would the future look like then?”

...We realized that the biggest obstacle to the kind of transformative change the Green New Deal envisions is overcoming the skepticism that humanity could ever pull off something at this scale and speed.”

- Naomi Klein



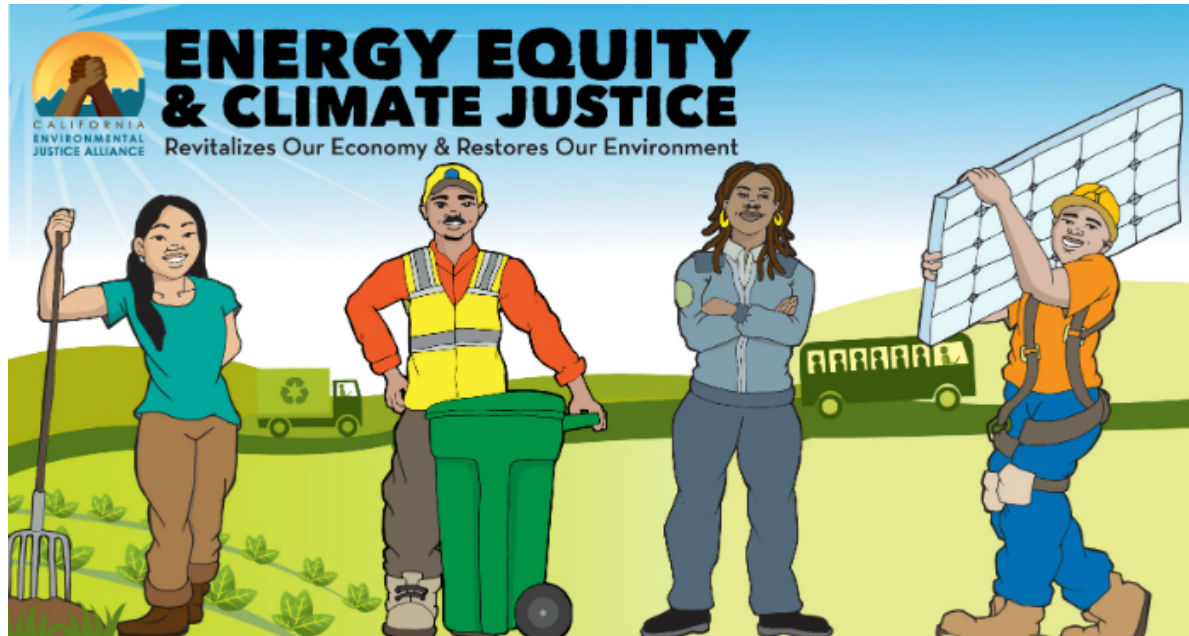


Identify + understand your audience(s)

- *Who* are they (e.g. basic demographic qualities)?
- *Where* do they live?
- How do they *self-identify*?
- What are their *core values and motivations*?
- To which other *communities or groups* are they connected?
- What are their *opinions and behaviors* on climate and energy issues, and why?



Understanding needs of central CA communities



“87% of constituents of the Inland Region identified themselves as being impacted by climate change and 64% constituents of color said that climate change disproportionately affects low income communities, reaffirming that *individuals who live with the most acute impacts of climate change understand that and can be organized.*”



Match your audience with credible messengers

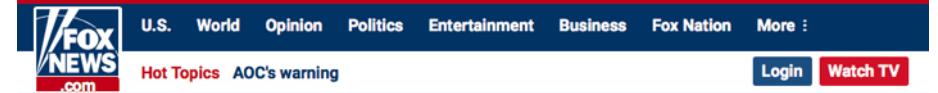
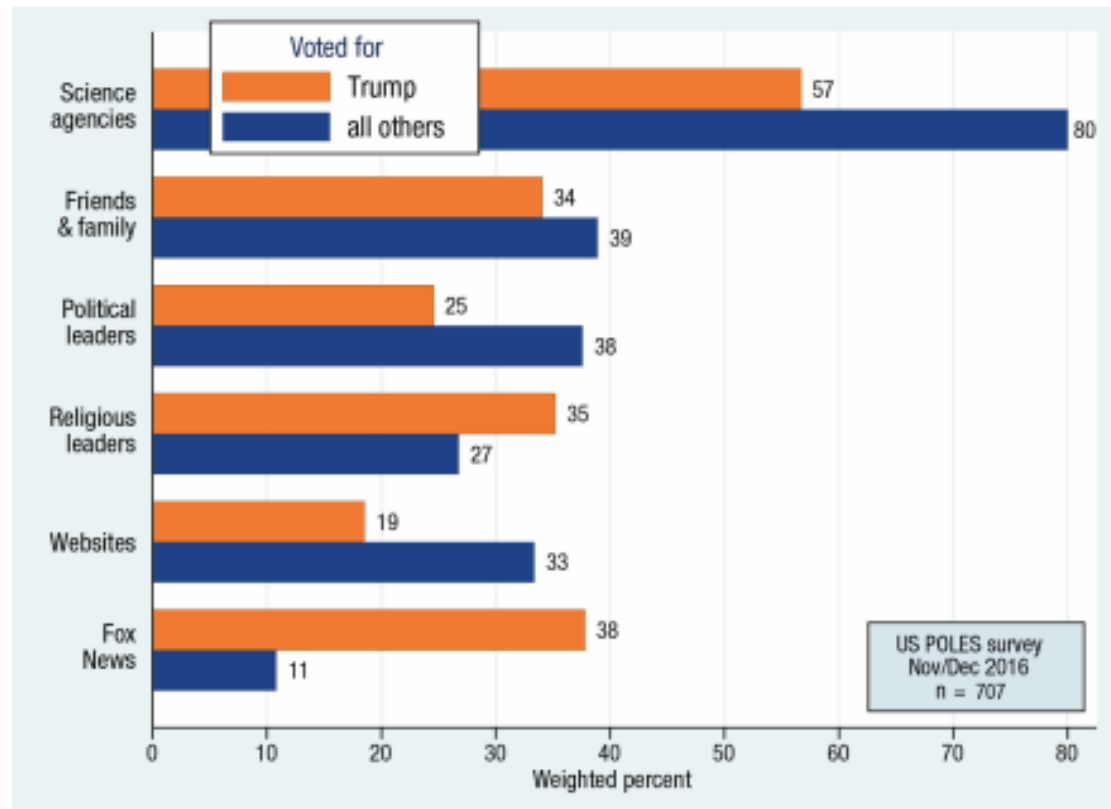
- “Source credibility” composed of *knowledgeability* and *relatability*
- Credibility is not inherent in any given messenger, but conferred by the audience
- Who does your audience *trust* as a *credible messenger* (e.g., individuals, media outlets) for information on climate and energy issues?





Who do conservatives trust for climate news?

FIGURE 3: WHO DO YOU TRUST FOR INFORMATION, COMPARING TRUMP VOTERS WITH ALL OTHERS



CLIMATE · Published April 8

Global warming is shrinking glaciers faster than we thought

Associated Press



This Sept. 22, 2018 file photo shows the Baishui Glacier No.1 on the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain in the southern province of Yunnan in China. Scientists say it is one of the fastest melting glaciers in the world due to climate change and its relative proximity to the Equator. It has lost 60 percent of its mass and shrunk 250 meters since 1982. (AP Photo/Sam McNeil)

WASHINGTON (AP) — Earth's glaciers are melting much faster than scientists thought. A new study shows they are losing 369 billion tons of snow and ice each year, more than half of that in North America.

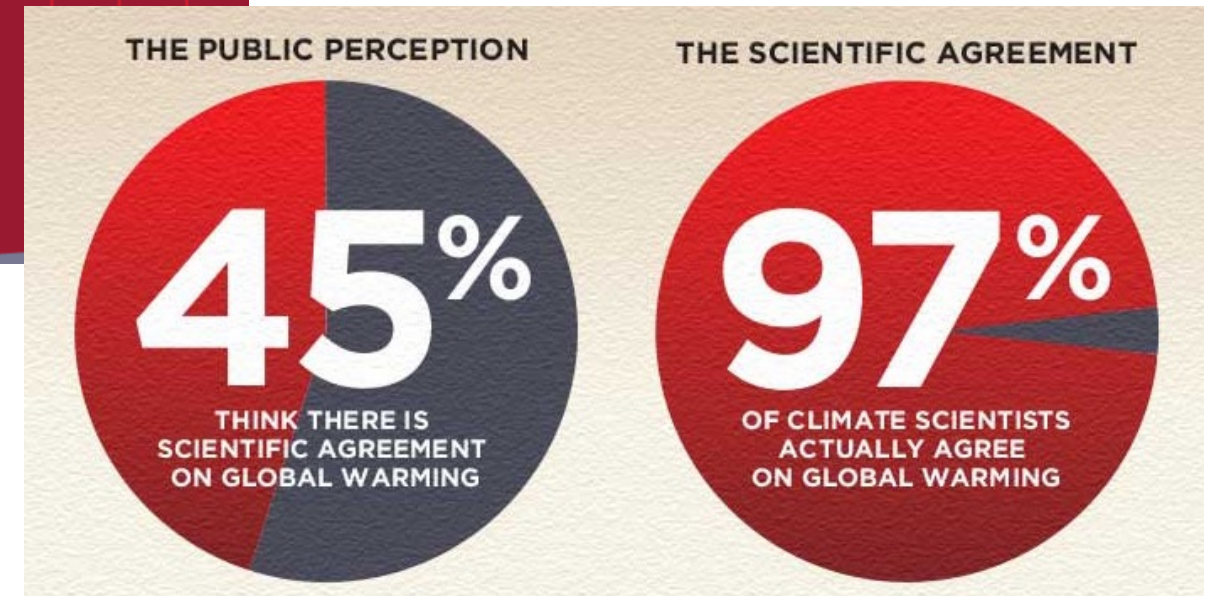
The most comprehensive measurement of glaciers worldwide found that thousands of inland masses of snow



Emphasize “scientific consensus” to mitigate polarization

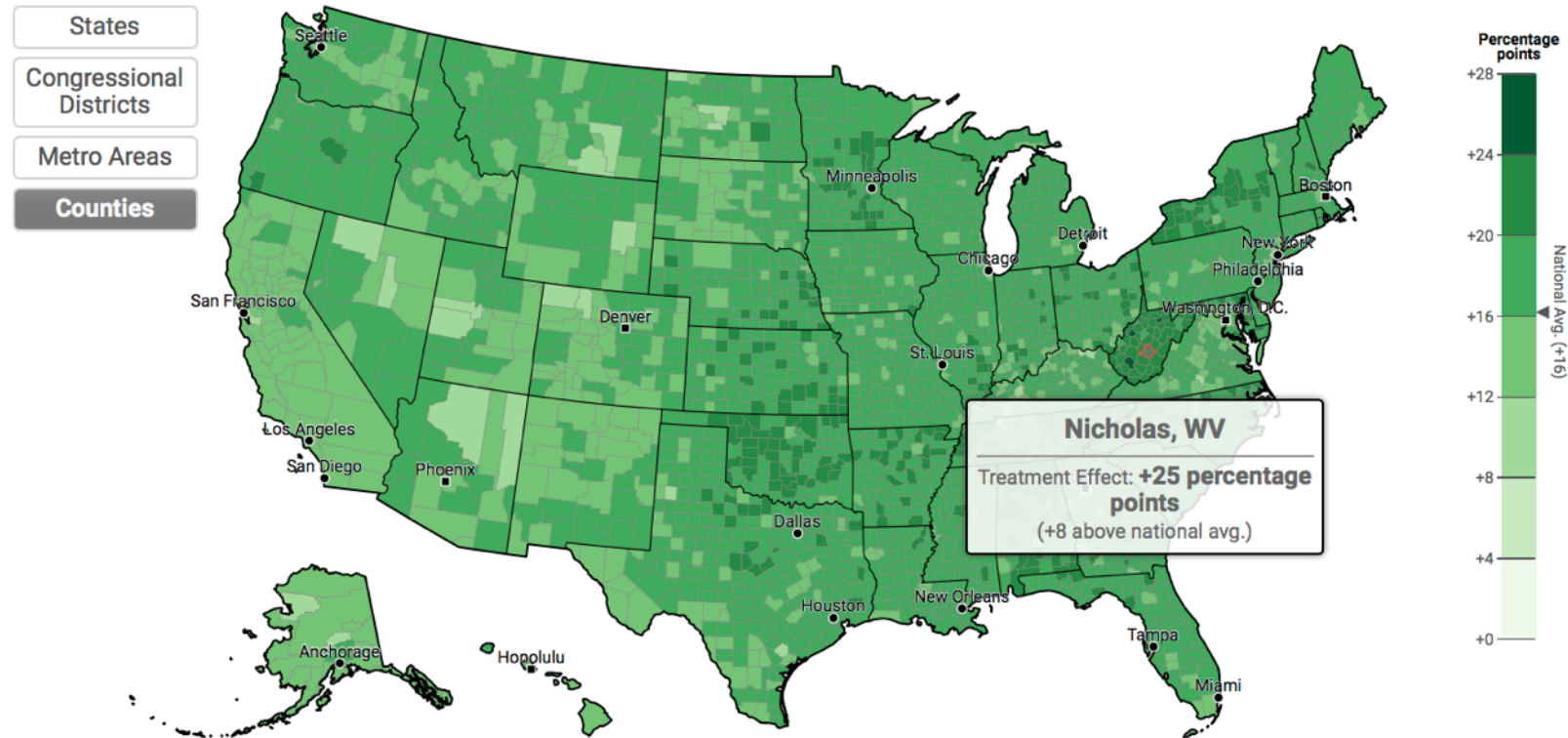


“When people don’t realize there’s a scientific consensus, they’re less likely to support climate action.”





Message most persuasive in conservative counties



“97% of climate scientists have concluded that human-caused global warming is happening....”



"Inoculate" against opposition arguments and misinformation

- Vaccinating audiences against counter-arguments
- Pointing out weaknesses in opposition messaging
- Can even be done retroactively





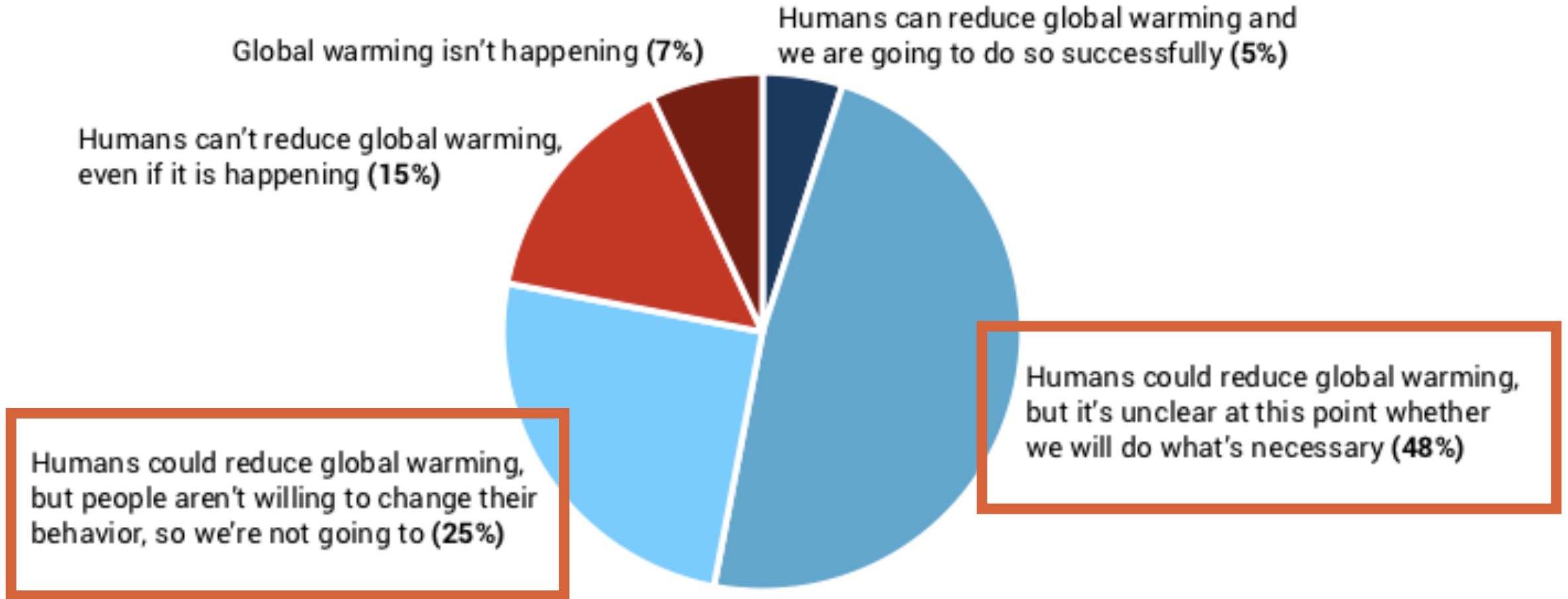
"Inoculate" against opposition arguments and misinformation

That scientific agreement increases with climate expertise has been exploited by those looking to cast doubt on expert consensus. Unfortunately, it's all-too-easy to mislead people into thinking that experts disagree on human-caused global warming. Just select a group of scientists with lower levels of expertise in climate science and portray their opinions as expert agreement. Or take it a step further and try it with non-scientists, which seems to work almost as well. If you want to work out whether you're getting taken in with the fake-expert strategy, take a closer look at the "experts" who are being cited.

"Don't be fooled"





Balance magnitude, urgency of problem with hope






Balance magnitude, urgency of problem with hope

 **Sunrise Movement**  @sunrisemvmt · 1h
You don't have to face the climate crisis alone.

There are so many people around you that want to see change, you just have to find them. Join a Sunrise hub near you sunrisemovement.org/hubs

@SunrisePDX



1.4K views | I want to breathe 0:30 / 1:00

3 33 102

Show this thread

“For as long as I can remember, I’ve been aware of climate change as this looming threat...I want a future. I want to breathe. I want to have kids who can breathe.”

Getting organized with a group of people that is constantly growing and constantly developing our strategies is the first time I have been able see tangible results.”

- Sunrise PDX activists



Build people's sense of efficacy

- **Self-efficacy:** “I am capable of acting!”
- **Response efficacy:** “Politicians will listen!”
- **Collective efficacy:** “We are more powerful when we act together!”
- **Collective response efficacy:** “Solutions will work!”





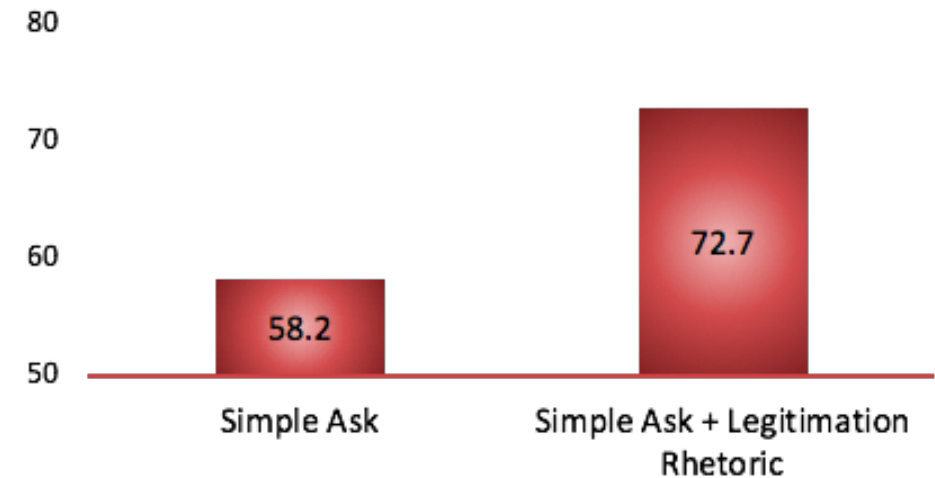
Increase self-efficacy through “legitimation rhetoric”

Characteristics of “*risky political action*”:

1. Unfamiliar, uncertain outcomes
2. Social interactions with unpleasant and/or hostile people

Will you help lobby your local Congressperson?
Please know that many people tell us they feel nervous about taking this on. It’s entirely understandable if you feel the same way. But it’s important to do...

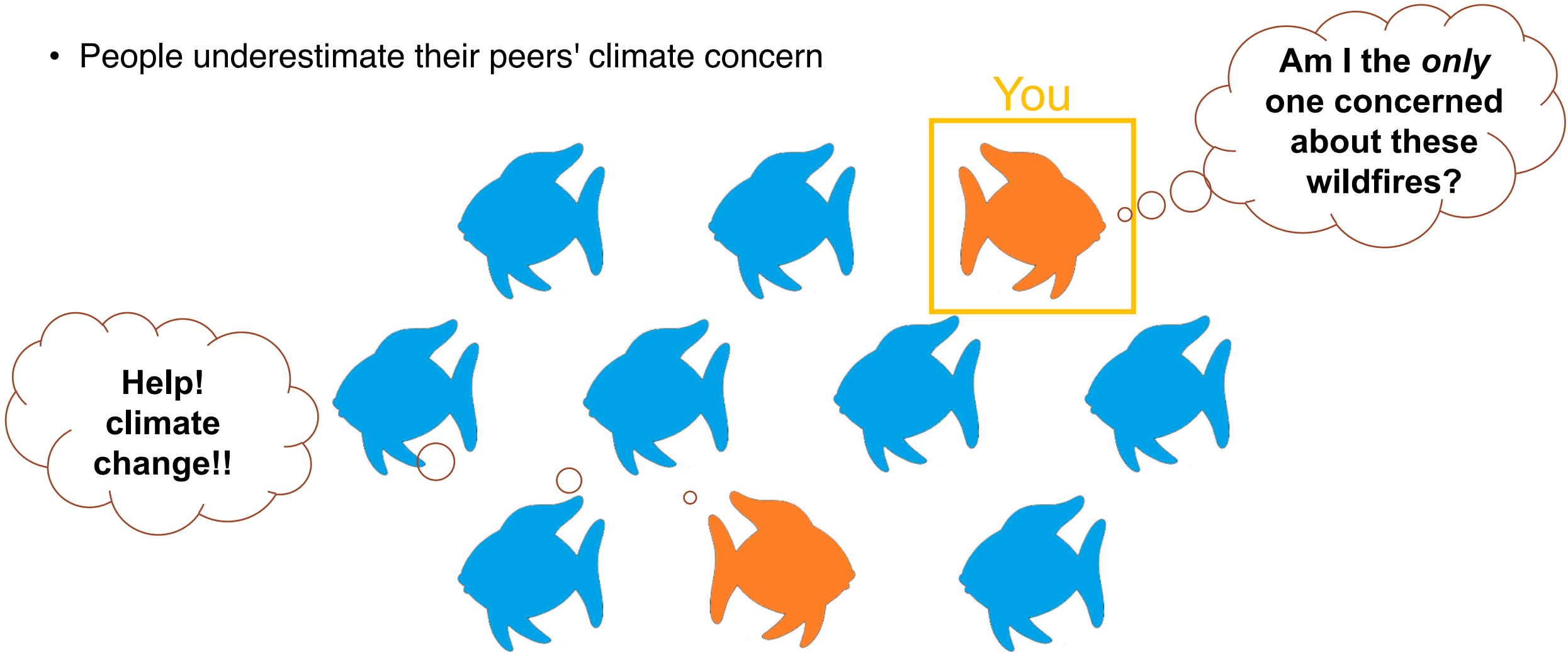
Will you lobby your congressperson on climate?
(% signing up)





Leverage the power of social norms

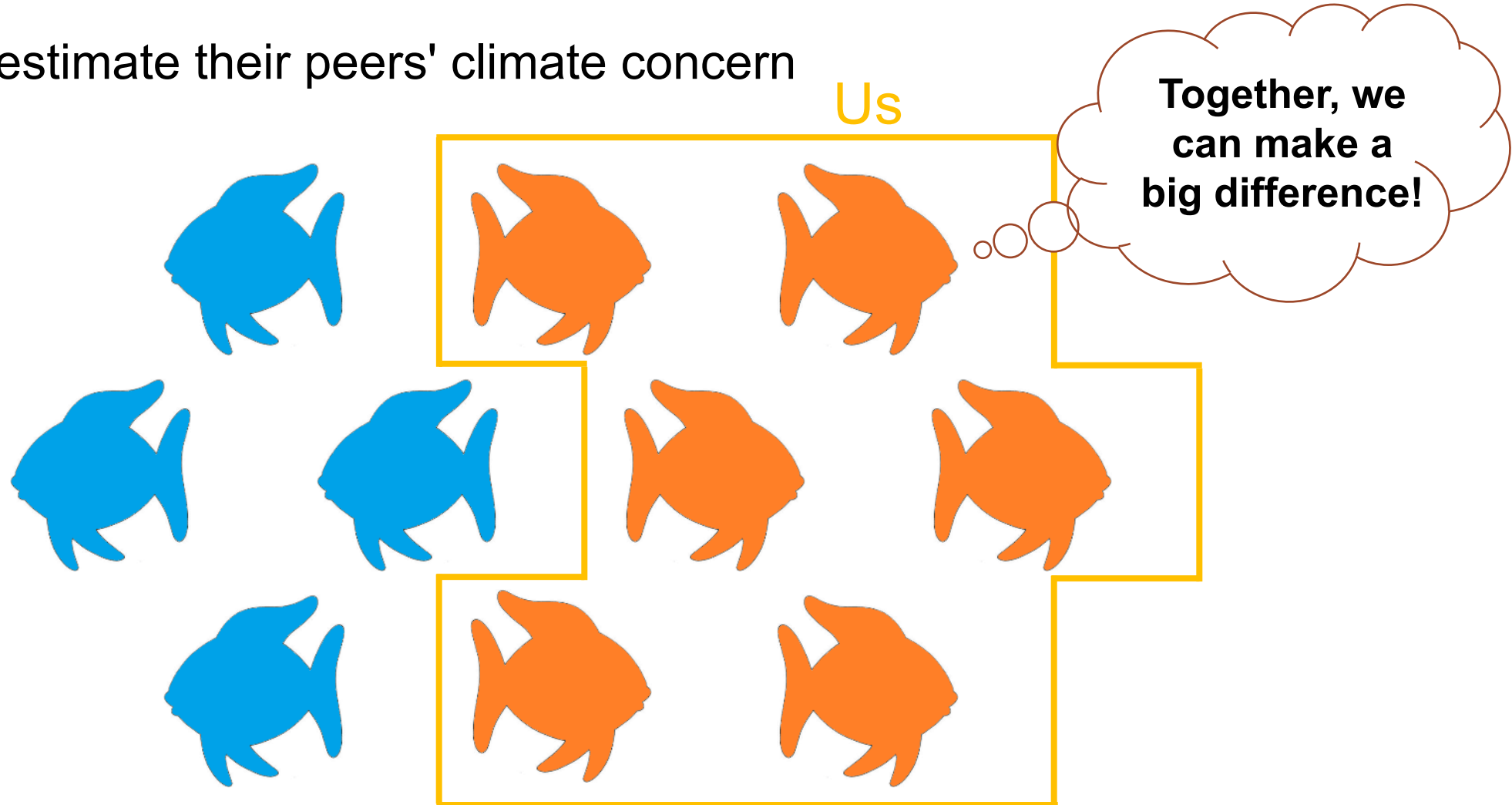
- People underestimate their peers' climate concern





Leverage the power of social norms

- People underestimate their peers' climate concern





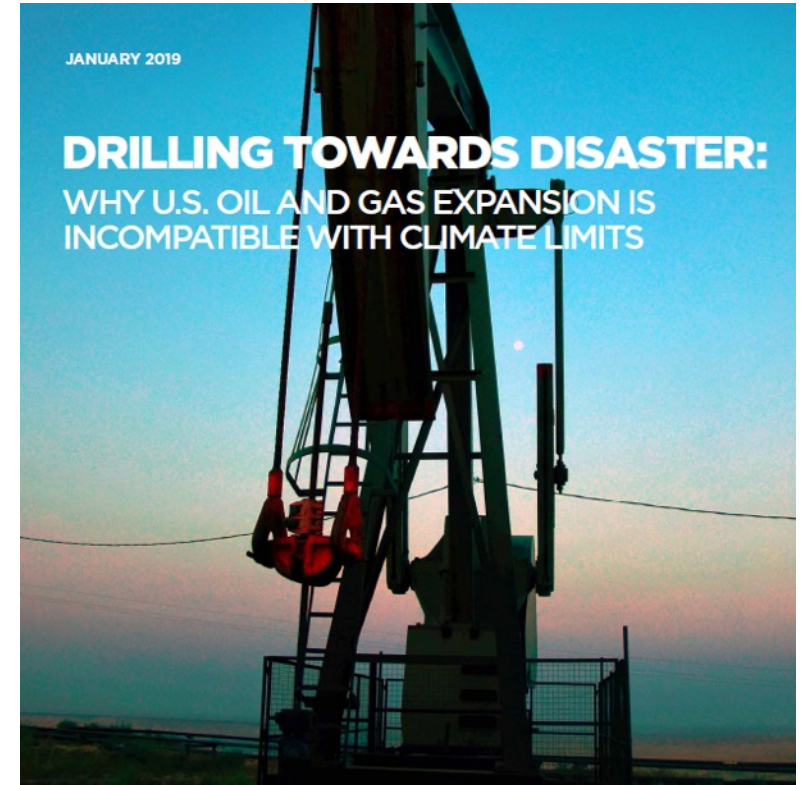
You're not alone! – even in Texas



Oil Change International

Sponsored • Paid for by Oil Change International

You're not alone. A growing number of Texans (now 71%) agree we should do more to fight climate change, including a majority of Texas Republicans. However, U.S. oil and gas production is poised for an expansion that will be unparalleled



Tap into existing identities and reinforce activist identity.

Two theories around identity formation:

- We look at our *past actions* and create an identity for ourselves based on how we can have acted historically.
- We create an identity for ourselves based on *who we want to be* (and *how we want others to see us*) and then take actions that align with that identity



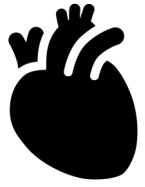


“Our job as parents is to work for solutions.”



“Getting a few parents together to go to the city council, getting our kids to testify – we can all do that. You just have to get that sense of ‘Si se puede,’ yes we can, and make it happen.”

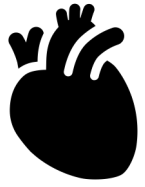
- Lisa Hoyos



Tell compelling, culturally-relevant, stories



- Stories help us to translate our values into the action
- Humans need stories both to contextualize the scale of impacts we face with climate change and imagine the required solutions
- Compel us to answer the question: *“What did you do when history called?”*



Telling youth climate activist stories



“We’re unlike any generation before us. We’re inheriting a world... incapable of sustaining us and we need to know about that.”

We need to know the science behind climate change and we need to know the political decisions that caused it in order to change course and ensure that we can give a better world to generations after us than the one we were born into.”

- Vic Barret



Message frames can make a difference.

- No “magical message frame”
- Consider your audience (how they self-identify, what issues that care about, etc.)
- Use messages that match their motivations



Our niños need clean electric school buses





Moral messages motivate people of faith



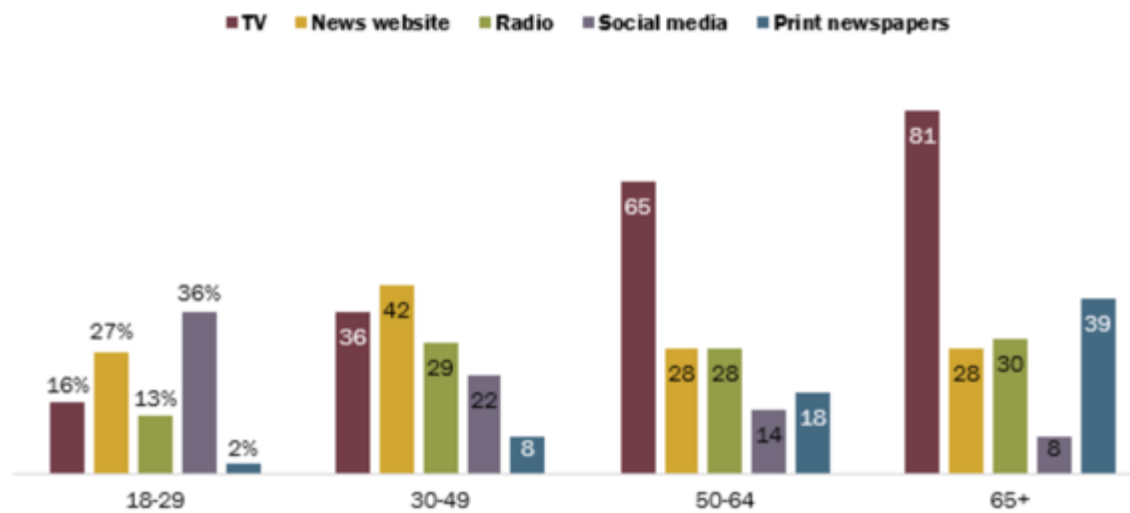
Emphasizing the religious and moral dimensions of global warming and Christian value of “protecting God’s creation” significantly increased:

- Extent to which Christians viewed environmental protection as a moral, religious, and economic issue
- Belief that *other people in their religious community* think environmental protection is important

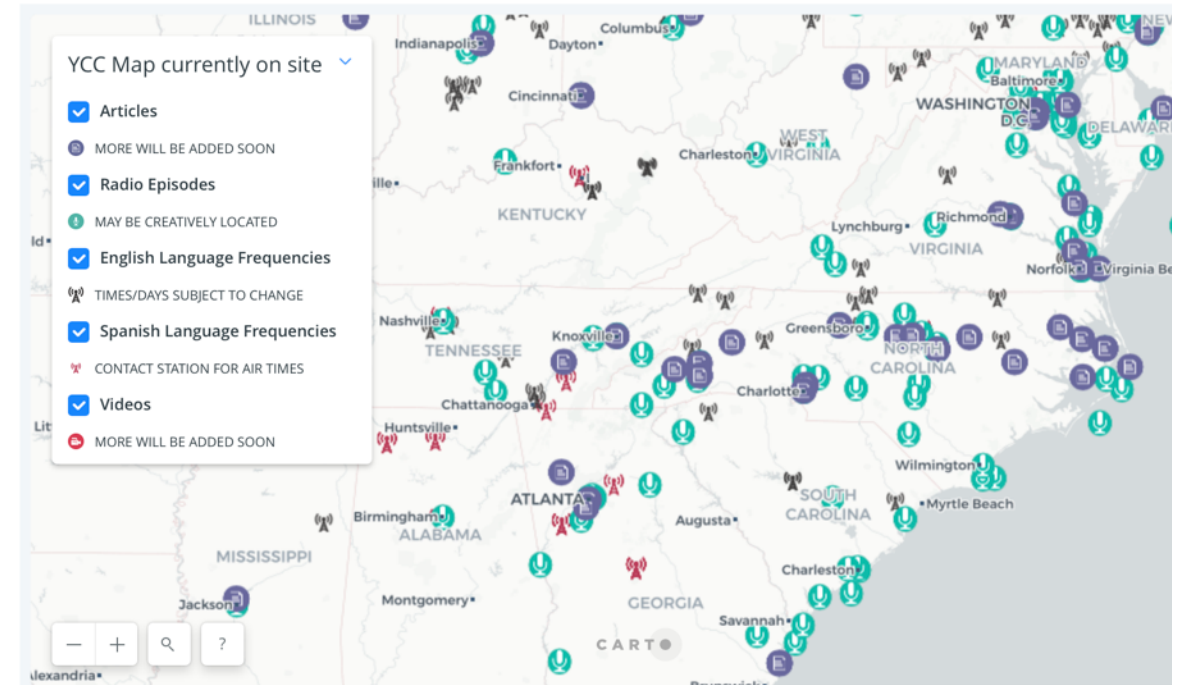
Pick an effective mode of contact

Television dominates as a news source for older Americans

% of each age group who *often* get news on each platform



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.



The Yale Center for Climate Change Communication broadcasts their “Climate Connection” stories on hundreds of English and Spanish-language radio stations

High action rates with peer-to-peer texting



Mass-texting platform

TODAY marks 4 years since the Flint Water Crisis--but the water is still toxic. Tell your Rep to support the WATER Act to help Flint & ensure we all have access to safe & affordable water. Dial 855-980-2268 or reply CALL to get connected -Liz,FWA.

●●● *Relay*

Hi! This is %Sender Name% volunteering w/ Food & Water Action. Today marks 4 years since the Flint Water Crisis--but the water is still toxic. Can you call your Rep & ask them to cosponsor the WATER Act to ensure that every person has access to safe & affordable water? Dial 877-434-0011 to get connected.

“Every 200 texts sent via Relay instead of the mass-text platform generated 1 additional call to elected officials in Michigan, demanding action to address the Flint water crisis.”

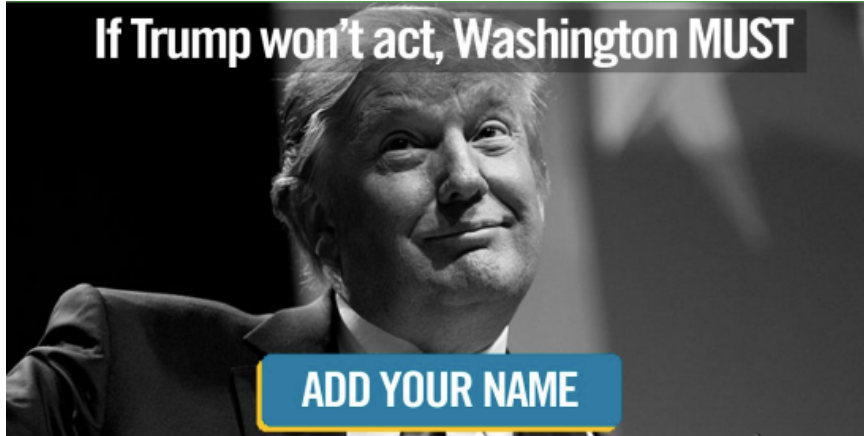
Test assumptions and new approaches!

- Communications work provides tons of opportunities to test and better understand what resonates with the communities and constituencies you want to activate
- You can test message, messenger, and mode of contact as well as with and without different images
- Testing can be fast, easy, and cheap! Connect with the Lab team if you have questions.





Testing message frames via Facebook



Anti-Trump



Anti-Fossil Fuels



Positive Clean Energy & Job Growth

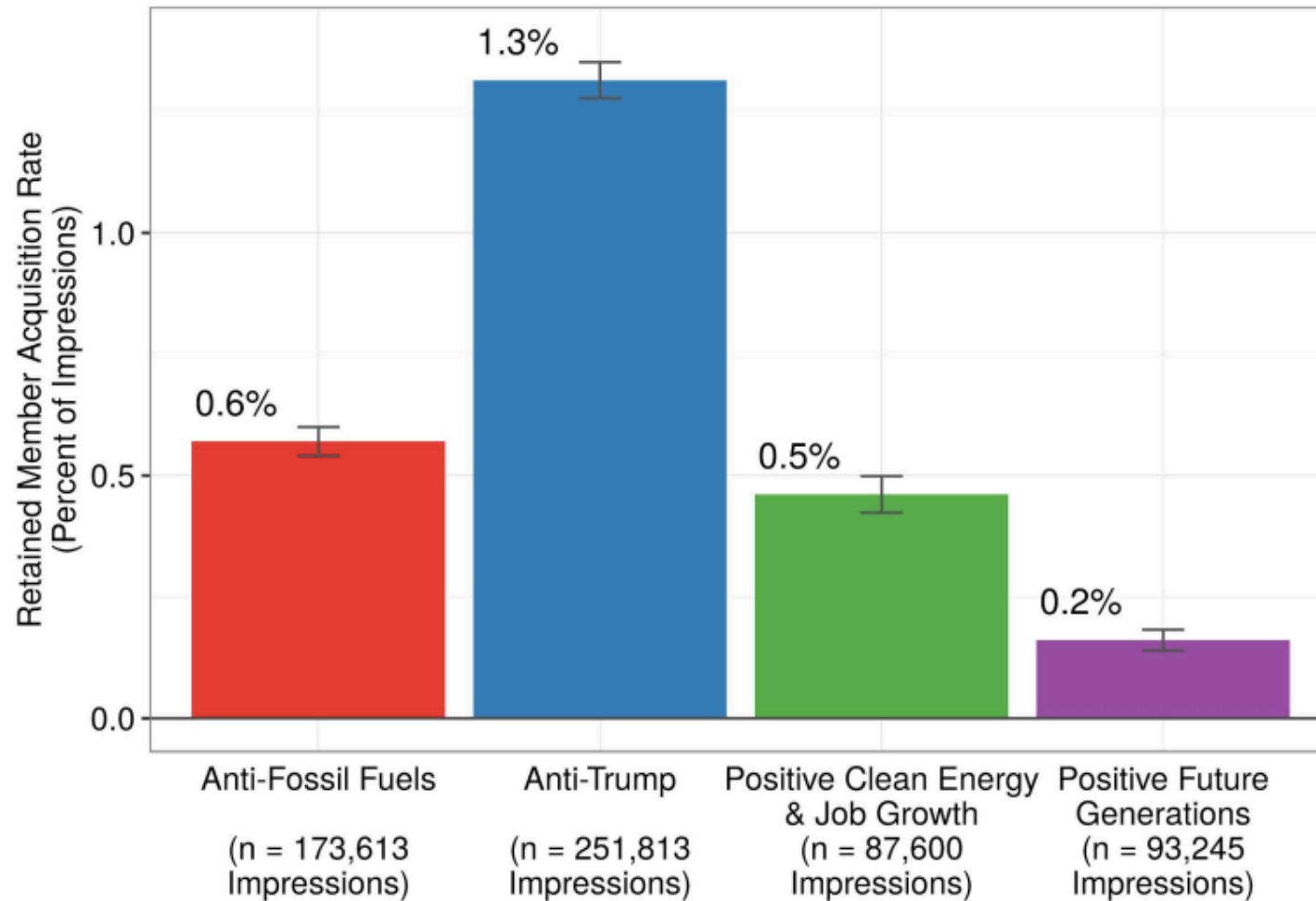


Positive Future Generations



Testing message frames via Facebook

Retained Member Acquisition Rate



When I first started planning for the strike, **I was super nervous** that not enough people would show up. But Sunrise leaders helped me make recruitment strategies that worked. One of the most effective strategies I found was just talking to people.

Legitimation rhetoric

Inoculation

I remember one night, a friend texted me, “I don’t wanna be mean, but do you think the government’s really gonna care what you’re doing? You’ve seen the people in office -- do you believe they’ll do anything?”

Outcome efficacy

I wrote back, “Yes. **The reason they don’t do anything is because we haven’t engaged in mass mobilization yet.** Throughout history, we’ve seen that it takes YEARS of marching, sitting in, and striking to get something done. **But there comes a point where they have to ‘do something.’”**

Response efficacy

Outcome efficacy





After that, he actually told me **he was convinced, and he ended up recruiting several of his friends to strike with him.**

In conversations like that, when I could see how I was directly growing our movement just by talking to people my age and recruiting them to strike, **I felt so powerful.** And that feeling only grew until strike day when my friends and I stood on a stage in front of 7,500 people, sharing our stories, and **feeling our deep power together.**

Personal efficacy

Group efficacy

To sum it all up:

-  Visionary narrative
-  Identify key audience(s)
-  Credible messengers
-  Emphasize scientific consensus
-  "Inoculate" against misinformation
-  Balance fear, hope, courage
-  Build efficacy
-  Leverage social norms
-  Tap into identities
-  Tell personal stories
-  Frame your message
-  Consider mode of contact
-  Test!

Bonus:
a **worksheet**
for you!

Developing an
audience-
centered
communications
strategy



**Developing an Audience-Centered Communications Strategy:
Deep-Dive Breakout Worksheet**

PART I:

Looking at your campaign plan, and any initial materials or ideas you have regarding how you will communicate with your target audience(s), think through and answer the following questions:

I. Audience Identification & Understanding

- a. Who are they (basic demographic qualities)?
- b. Where do they live?
- c. How do they self-identify? What are their core values and core motivations? To what other communities/groups are they connected?
- d. What are their opinions and behaviors on climate/energy issues?

II. Telling a Story, Moving Beyond the Facts & Numbers

- a. Are there heroes, villains and/or victims in your campaign to highlight?
- b. For your campaign, how did we get here, and where do we want to go?
- c. Are there particular images that help tell this story?

III. Balancing of Hope & Fear

- a. What about your campaign/issue will your audience be afraid of?
- b. What about your campaign/issue will give your audience hope?
- c. How will you balance the two in your communications? (Or won't you?)

