Effective Communication to Influence Attitudes and Behaviors

Mary E. Allen and David K. Loomis
East Carolina University

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Educating the Public

• Information Deficit Model
• Assumes
  – the public lacks information
  – “education” will lead to environmentally responsible behavior
• This is ineffective

“If only they knew what we knew”...
Cognitive Hierarchy

- Behaviors
- Behavioral Intentions
- Attitudes and Norms
- Value Orientations
- Values
ATTITUDES & Behavior

ATTITUDES
(Behavioral beliefs x Outcome evaluations)

SUBJECTIVE NORMS
(Normative beliefs x Motivation to comply)

PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL
(Control beliefs x Influence of control beliefs)

INTENT

BEHAVIOR

(Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975)
Information Processing

- 4 Stages

- Variables:
  Source, Message, Recipient, Medium
Elaboration Likelihood Model

Central Route

Peripheral Route

Success varies with a person’s *ability* and *motivation*

Petty & Cacioppo (1986)
Could you please elaborate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Route</th>
<th>Peripheral Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivated &amp; able to process message</td>
<td>Not motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message is relevant</td>
<td>Message is not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use strong arguments</td>
<td>Use peripheral cues (e.g., attractiveness, source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>credibility, humor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer lasting change</td>
<td>Change doesn’t last long</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mediated Communication

- Information sources
  - Newspapers; Radio; Television
  - Government agency publications
  - Interpretive programs

- Social interactions
  - Online media
  - Talking with others
  - Organizations

“To what extent do you make use of the following information sources?”
Most Used Info Sources
- Talking with other anglers/divers
- Bait/tackle or dive shops

Least Used Info Sources
- Publications
  - Gov. agency
  - Conservation
- Radio

Florida Keys (2007)
Most Used Info Sources
• Internet
• Talking with other snorkelers
• Dive shops

Least Used Info Sources
• Publications
  • Gov. agency
  • Conservation
• Radio; Television
Implications

- Studies suggest a “peripheral” route would be a more effective way to communicate.
- Target group values
- Social networks
- Online media
Conclusion

• Simply “educating the public” is ineffective
• Get to know your audience
• What is your message?
• Communication
  – Directly relevant
  – Easy to understand
• Ecosystem services
Thanks!

Mary E. Allen
allenmar12@students.ecu.edu

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