

Science Communication Survey Responses & Day 2 Overview

Meg Cole, STAC Coordinator



Audience and Engagement Challenges



Diverse Audience

- wide range: gov officials, policymakers, scientists, residents, students, media
- challenge ensuring stakeholders recognize the relevance of the science & understand the broader policy/regulatory contexts in which the science is needed

Communication Challenges

- explaining the need for long-term research, articulating complex topics in understandable ways, overcoming biases or narrow perspectives
- avoiding information overload within limited time frames

Tailored Approach

- Need a customized communication to suit specific audience needs/background; translating complex topics into understandable language for diverse stakeholders, from technical staff to elected officials to the general public

Workshop Focus



What specific topics or areas of expertise would you like the science communication workshop to focus on to enhance your communication skills?

(Most popular responses first)

- Transferring complex concepts into visuals/diagrams
- Communicating science to stakeholders affected by decisions
- Assessing audience technical knowledge and interest
- Narrative building for different audiences
- Breaking down complicated content/speaking in non-technical language
- Messaging on critical issues like climate change

Past Experiences and Lessons



Overall Takeaway: Science communication success hinges on targeting decision-makers who can enact change.

- **Lesson 1:** Keep messages short and repeat the main points at the beginning and end to maintain clarity and engagement.
- **Lesson 2:** Repeated presentations help refine messaging over time, leading to more effective communication.
- **Lesson 3:** Understanding the tension between delivering scientific findings and political considerations is crucial. Unfavorable findings should be delivered clearly, accompanied by actionable suggestions.
- **Lesson 4:** Present scientific findings as part of an ongoing process of discovery, not as definitive truths. Policy-makers often seek answers to political questions, not just scientific ones.

Past Experiences and Lessons



Overall Takeaway: Science communication success hinges on targeting decision-makers who can enact change.

- **Lesson 1:** Keep messages short and repeat the main points at the beginning and end to maintain clarity and engagement.
- **Lesson 2:** Repeated presentations are more effective communication.
- **Lesson 3:** Understanding the tension between scientific and political considerations is crucial. Use clear, actionable suggestions.
- **Lesson 4:** Present scientific findings as part of an ongoing process of discovery, not as definitive truths. Policy-makers often seek answers to political questions, not just scientific ones.

How comfortable are you currently with conveying complex scientific concepts to policymakers?
Moderate, responses between 3-5

Concerns



Are there any specific concerns or issues related to science communication within your field of expertise that you would like addressed in the workshop?

Apathy towards Environmental Concerns

- especially noted when communicating with elected officials

Simplifying Complex Scientific Issues

- STAC members want guidance on distilling key findings and take-home messages

Challenges with Quantitative Work and Math Aversion

- “stakeholders may be disinterested due to previous experiences with obsolete studies”

Distinguishing Between Science and Engineering

Addressing Misinformation and Belief Systems

- Build trust and rapport, empower audience to critically think and evaluate, cultural and value-based considerations