

Advocacy, Networking & Influencing



Advocacy



Definitions

- The promotion of a specific message and/or actions to influence or contribute to development and the political process (Oxfam)
- The process of influencing decision makers and opinion leaders in order to change policy and practice (Action Aid)
- Advocacy is not just about getting to the table with a new set of interests, it is about changing the size and configuration of the table to accommodate a whole new set of actors. Effective advocacy challenges imbalances of power and changes thinking.

Real life examples

- Think of an example of advocacy that you have been involved in
- What did you do?
- What were the results?

Principles

- Targeted - understand the audience and the context
- Clear objectives
- Simple, brief messages
- A clear explanation of the challenges
- Proposing possible solutions
- It is a process
- Encourages the audience to take action

Steps in Developing a Communication/ Advocacy Strategy

Name:

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY TEMPLATE

Why do you want to communicate?

Your objective

What do you want to say?

Your message

Who needs to hear it?

Your audience

What's in it for them?

Your angle

How can you reach them?

Your strategy and tools

What have you got?

Resources

Did you succeed?

Evaluation against baselines

Why do you want to communicate?

- Your objective?
- What is happening now that needs to happen differently in the future?
- What is the change you hope to achieve?

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What do you want to say?

- Your message.
- There's no substitute for good research and honesty!
- You should be more aware of any flaws or weaknesses in your argument than your opponents.

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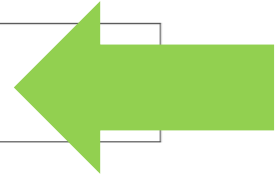
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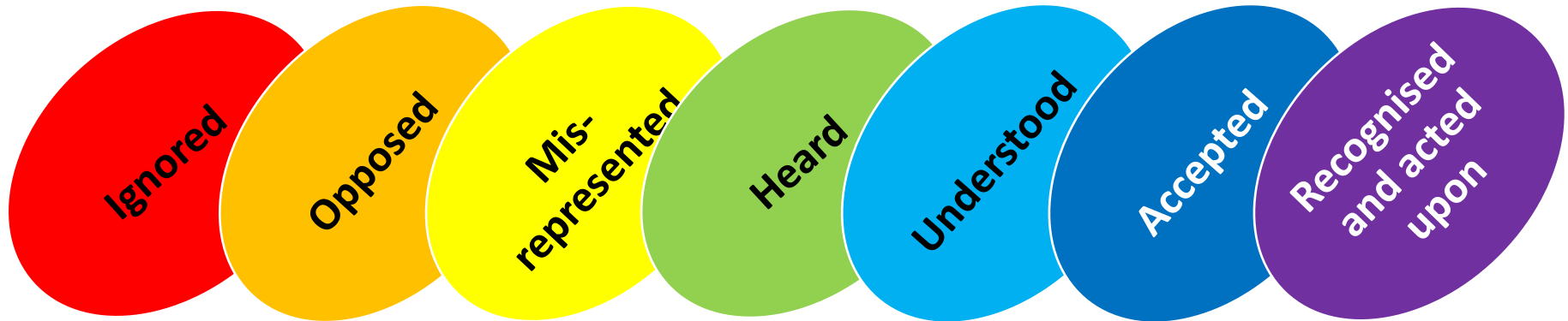


Good messaging is

- True
- Believable
- Memorable
- Defensible

*Steer clear of jargon, acronyms and anything that separates the audience from your message.

Advocacy Messages



Ignored

Opposed

**Mis-
represented**

Heard

Understood

Accepted

**Recognised
and acted
upon**

Testing your message: Q&A

- Get people to challenge you by raising concerns or asking awkward questions.
- Write down all the possible negative or difficult questions you may get in response to your message, and the best possible answers.
- If you do not have an answer – you are not ready to communicate!

Example: The Story of REDD

The Message:

“There is a dangerous new UN process called REDD and you need to know about it because it could affect you, your family and your access to your land.”

Q&A

- “Why is the UN process dangerous?”
- “How can it be a bad thing to pay people to protect forests?”
- “Why are you being negative about this positive idea before it has even happened?”
- “If you don’t like REDD, what is your alternative?”

Your turn!

- Think of a message you or your organisation want to communicate.
 - Work with a partner on a Q&A, thinking of all the awkward questions or responses you might face.
 - Can you respond to them?
-

Who needs to hear it?

- Your audience.
- Who has to do what differently in order to achieve the desired objectives?
- Are there a number of different audiences?
- Are there some that you should spend more time on than others?

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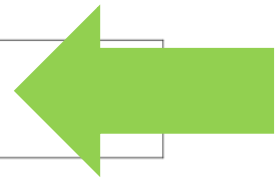
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What's in it for them?

- Your angle
- Hit the WIFU (“What’s in it for us?”) button.
- What are the reasons for your audience’s current attitudes/behaviour in relation to your message?
- How could you persuade them to think/behave in the desired way?

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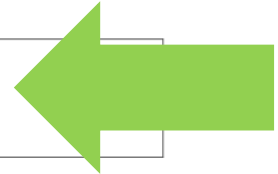
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How can you reach them?

- Your strategy and tools
- Which tools and channels are best to get your message across to your audience(s)?
- The messenger can sometimes be as important as the message; should be credible, knowledgeable and trustworthy to the audience you are trying to reach.

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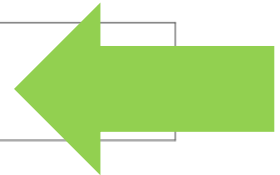
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Tools and Channels

- **Possible tools:** written reports, videos, pictures, presentations, speeches, posters, briefing notes, first-hand accounts etc.
- **Possible channels:** Mass media (TV, radio, film, newspapers, magazines, DVD, mass emails and SMS messages), social media, blogs, pamphlets, public events and other face-to-face meetings

What resources have you got?

- Be realistic!
- Take into account budget, human resources and timeline

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Did you succeed?

- Evaluation against baselines?
- **Outputs** (e.g. number of press releases, events held etc) versus **Outcomes** (Opinion, attitude, behaviour change)

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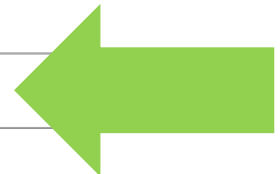
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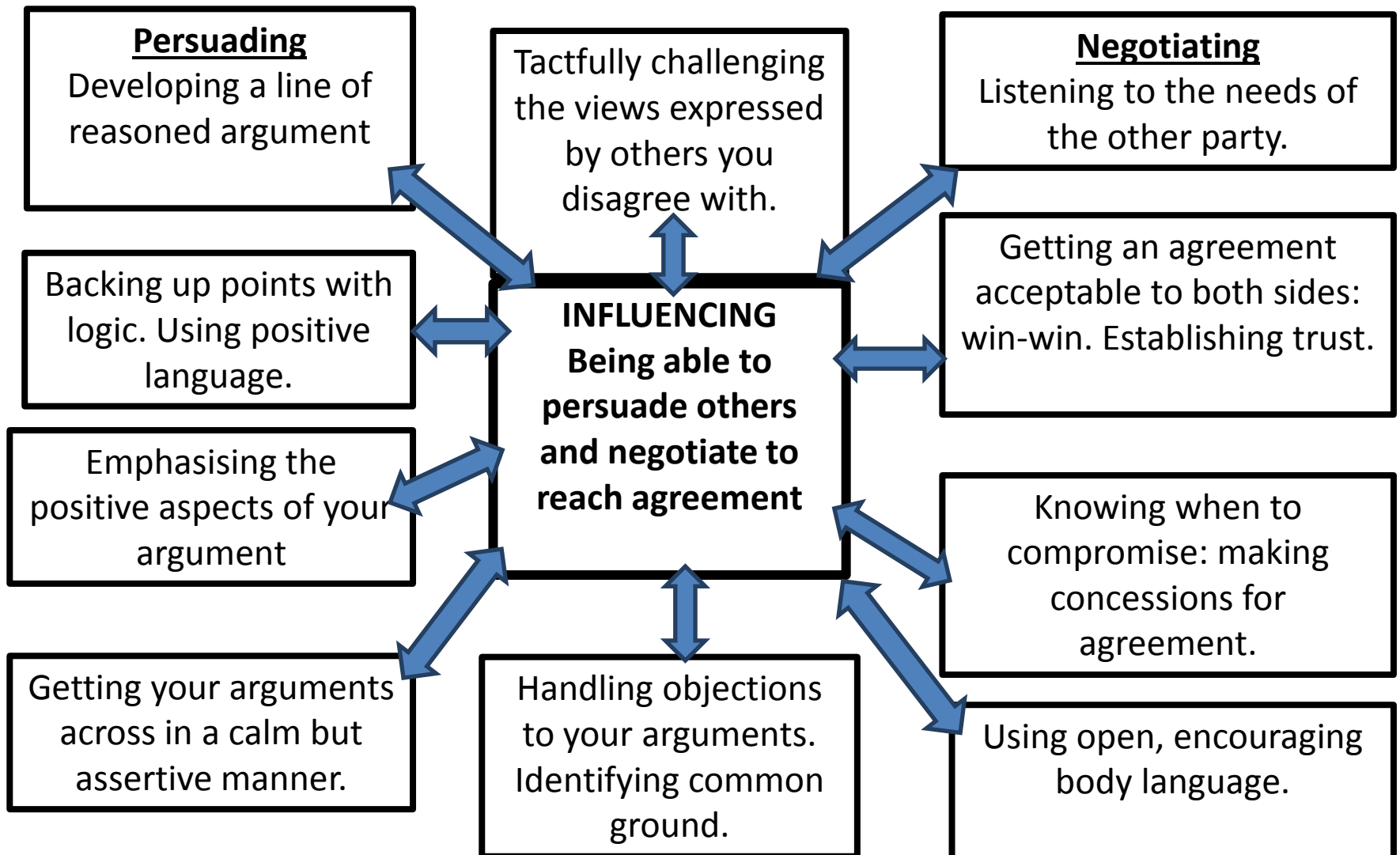
Networking & Influencing



**How do you feel in a
networking situation?
Why?**

Tips for Networking

- **Make networking a regular activity**
- **Know who you are reaching out to**
- **Use positive language**
- **Cultivate particular contacts**
- **Learn to write good emails**
- **Don't expect anything**



What do we mean by influencing?



- A dictionary definition suggests that it is when we change someone's views, attitudes, decisions, perceptions or beliefs to produce an effect on them – in a positive way. It involves adapting your words and behaviour subtly through an awareness of the effect you are having on someone else. Through these skills you can move things forward and gain agreement or change someone's mind and, importantly, you can achieve this without pushing, forcing or telling them what to do.

Four Key Influencing Skills



- **Probing and listening**
- **Building rapport**
- **Selling**
- **Assertiveness**

Role Play Activity