

Utility Communications: From Good to Great

A Workshop for Members of the Northern California Power Agency

Roseville, California
John Egan
March 15, 2018



Today's Agenda

- ▀ Goal Setting
- ▀ Communications as Storytelling
- ▀ Working with the News Media
- ▀ Messaging: So Much Detail, So Little Time
- ▀ Crisis Communications
- ▀ Public Speaking



Why Communicate?

- ▶ Help maintain local control (APPA RAPP)
- ▶ Improve CSAT scores
- ▶ Manage risks
- ▶ Increase customer participation in programs
- ▶ Manage your brand
- ▶ Inform and protect your customers (scams)
- ▶ Meet customer expectations (JDPA)



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How We Learn



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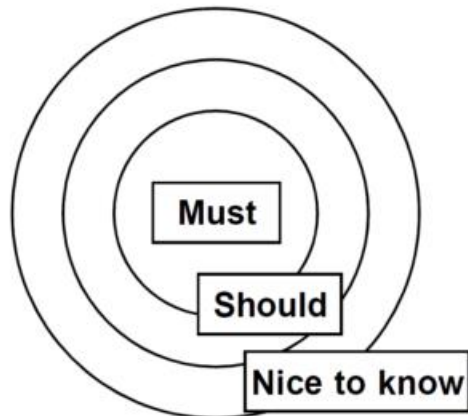
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Communications Triage



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Source: Peter Garber

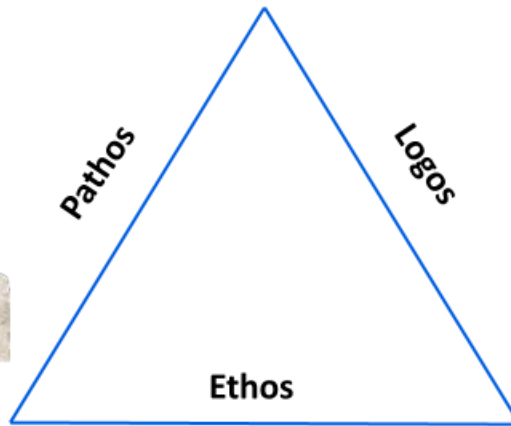
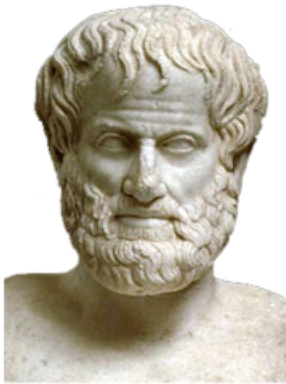
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Aristotle's Comms Guide



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“Poles & Wires are Boring, People are Interesting”



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Small-Group Exercise: Storytelling

- Create a 1-minute story on any topic:
 - Why we're raising our prices
 - Why we're installing AMI
 - Why we're reorganizing/cutting staff
 - Why we're adding renewable generation
 - Why we're sunsetting our net metering program



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Old Sayings, Eternal Truths

- “Our job is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”
- “If it bleeds, it leads.”
- News is something important that doesn’t happen every day.
- “Consider taking out an ad.”



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How Sticky Stories Start

- “Charlene Hook cherished her home of 30 years north of Corcoran, where pomegranate and pistachio orchards stretched for miles. So choosing to burn it down last year was a difficult decision.”

L.A. Times (Feb. 4, 2018)



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Sticky Messages

- “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”
- “Bin Laden is dead, GM is alive.”
- “We hit a 50-million-mile hole in one.”
- “You can’t drink money.”



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Messaging: Only Half the Battle



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The Special Case of PowerPoint



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