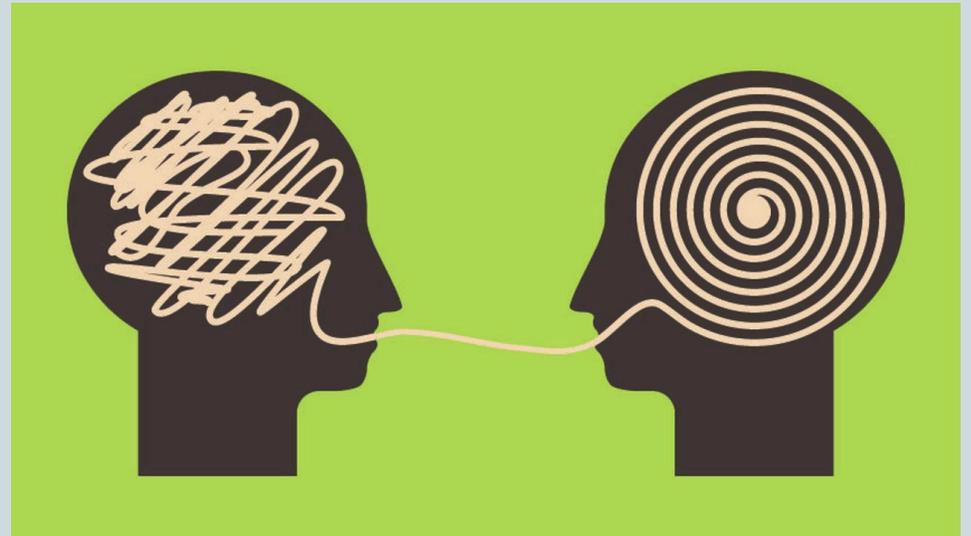


How to
communicate
without sounding
like a jargon-filled
windbag



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Why are we here?

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All change
begins with language.

Cheryl Heller



Components of Strategic Communications

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- Website strategy
- Traditional media
- Brand management
- Contacts management
- Events
- External representation
- Content creation
 - Blog/social media/email listserve
 - Audience segmentation, experimentation & analytics
 - Storytelling approach
 - Photography
 - Staff skills development
 - Books
 - Film/video projects

Who is *this* windbag?

4



Who is this windbag next to me?

5

In pairs:

1. In one sentence, describe what you do all day in your work.
2. What does your mom (or other elder in your family) say that you do?

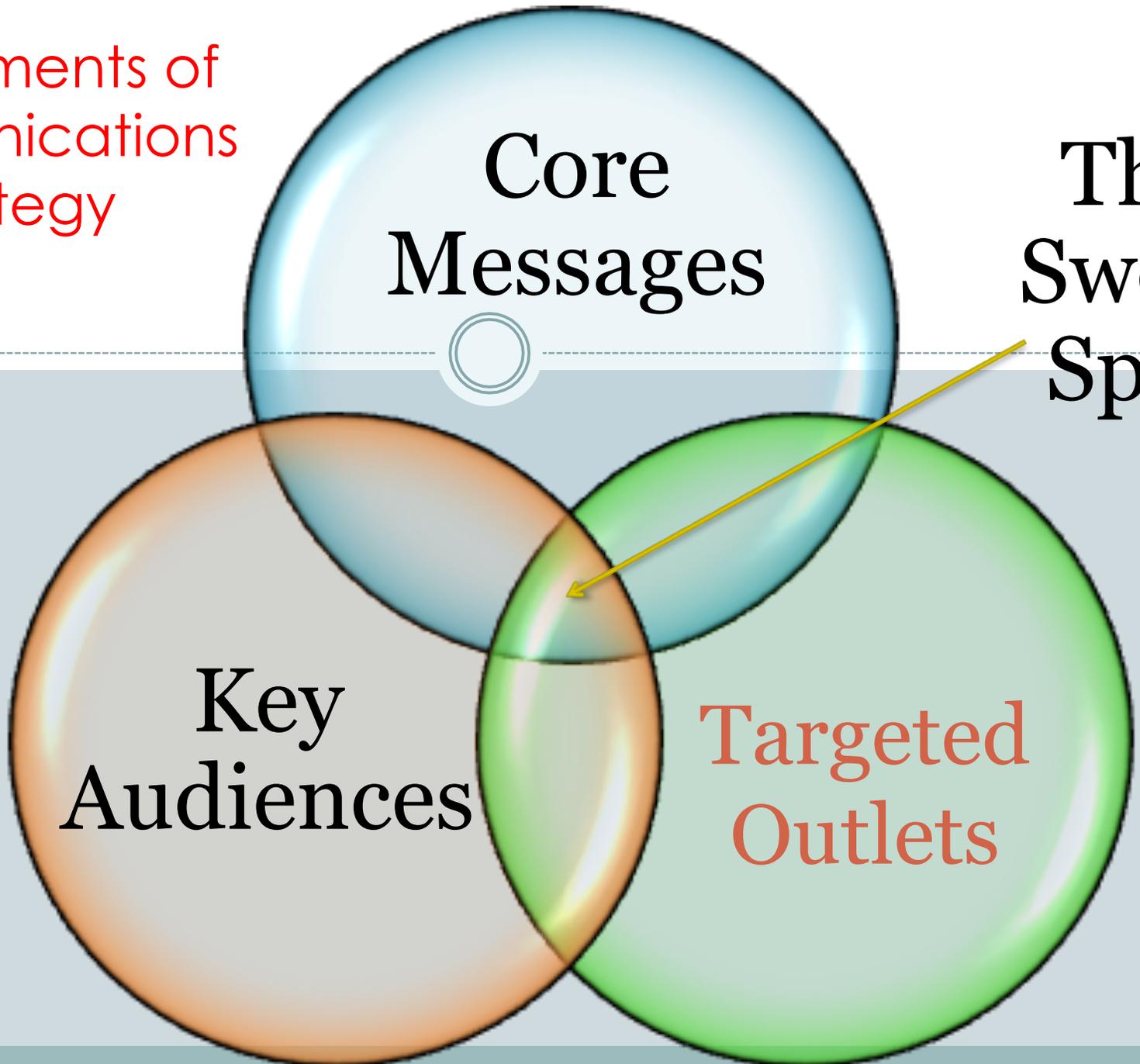
Key Elements of
Communications
Strategy

Core
Messages

The
Sweet
Spot

Key
Audiences

Targeted
Outlets



Will you and your message get lost?





Session Objectives

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- 1) Identify and understand the “curse of knowledge” and how it affects your work
- 2) Showcase practical tips and gain experience you can use to paint a fuller, more inclusive picture of how social change occurs.

Part I

Strategic Communications: A two-way street

- You want to communicate and share something with your reader/listener.
- You want them, in turn, not only to read your paper or blog, but to understand it, comment on it, share it, Tweet it, care about it...
- You want them to act on it...



RAINDANCE **Raindance Film Fest** @Raindance · 3h
Check out this **great blog** from @Hit_Delete on making a #lowbudget #film - pretty AND informative! ow.ly/Jnr3y

Scope @scope · 3h
Great blog by model Hayley about perceptions of disability in fashion bit.ly/1z2QqKT #LFW #100days100stories



Assemblyman Ed Ra @EdwardRa19 · 4h
Have to tip my hat to @carolburris for another **great blog** piece! Always says and does what's best for the kids washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-s...

But there's one big mistake that gets in the way...



**ASSUMING
PEOPLE KNOW
WHAT YOU KNOW.**

“THE CURSE OF KNOWLEDGE”



“The curse of knowledge is the single best explanation of why good people write bad prose.

“It simply doesn't occur to the writer that her readers don't know what she knows—that they can't divine the missing steps that seem too obvious to mention, have no way to visualize a scene that to her is as clear as day.

“And so the writer doesn't bother to explain the jargon, or spell out the logic, or supply the necessary detail.”

~Stephen Pinker in the *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 25, 2014
<http://on.wsj.com/1CUliAI>



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION



- Have you seen the curse of knowledge in action in your work? Share specific examples.
- What effect did it have on the reader or listener? Or on you?



THE “CURSE” IN ACTION



1. **Too self-promotional.** Content doesn't strike the right tone. It gives them the “hard sell” rather than inviting them in.
2. **Internally-focused.** Communications don't connect the organization to the outside world and/or what's currently on reader's minds.



THE “CURSE” IN ACTION



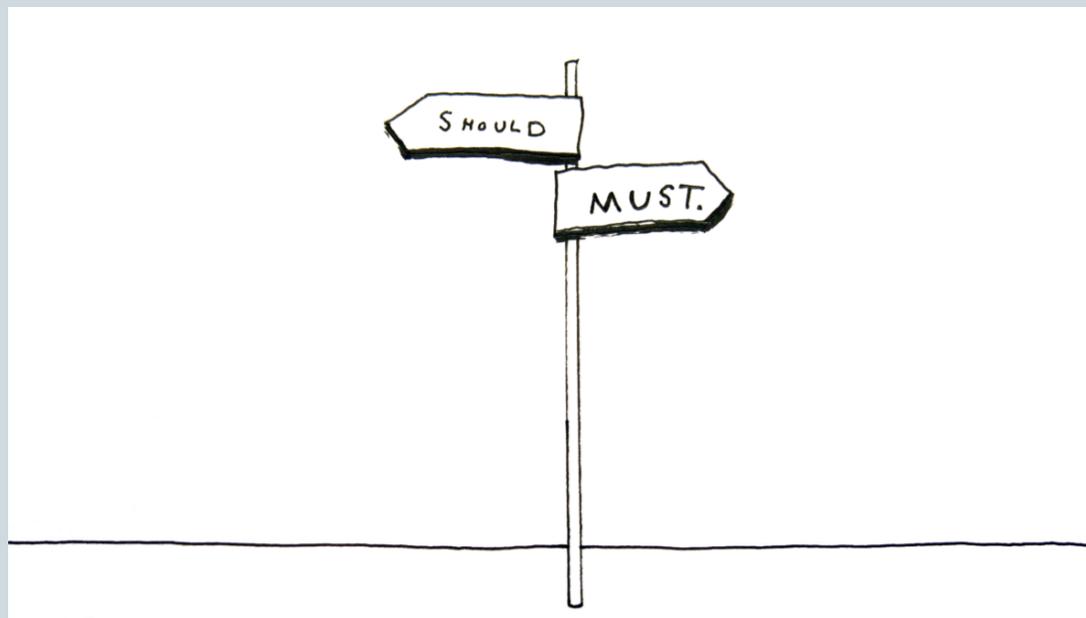
- 3. Institutional voice or speak.** This can dilute an author’s personal voice or perspective.
- 4. Too risk-averse.** What’s the bigger risk? Avoiding being provocative? “Thinking aloud” and being criticized? Or risk being...



WHY IS THE “CURSE” DETRIMENTAL?

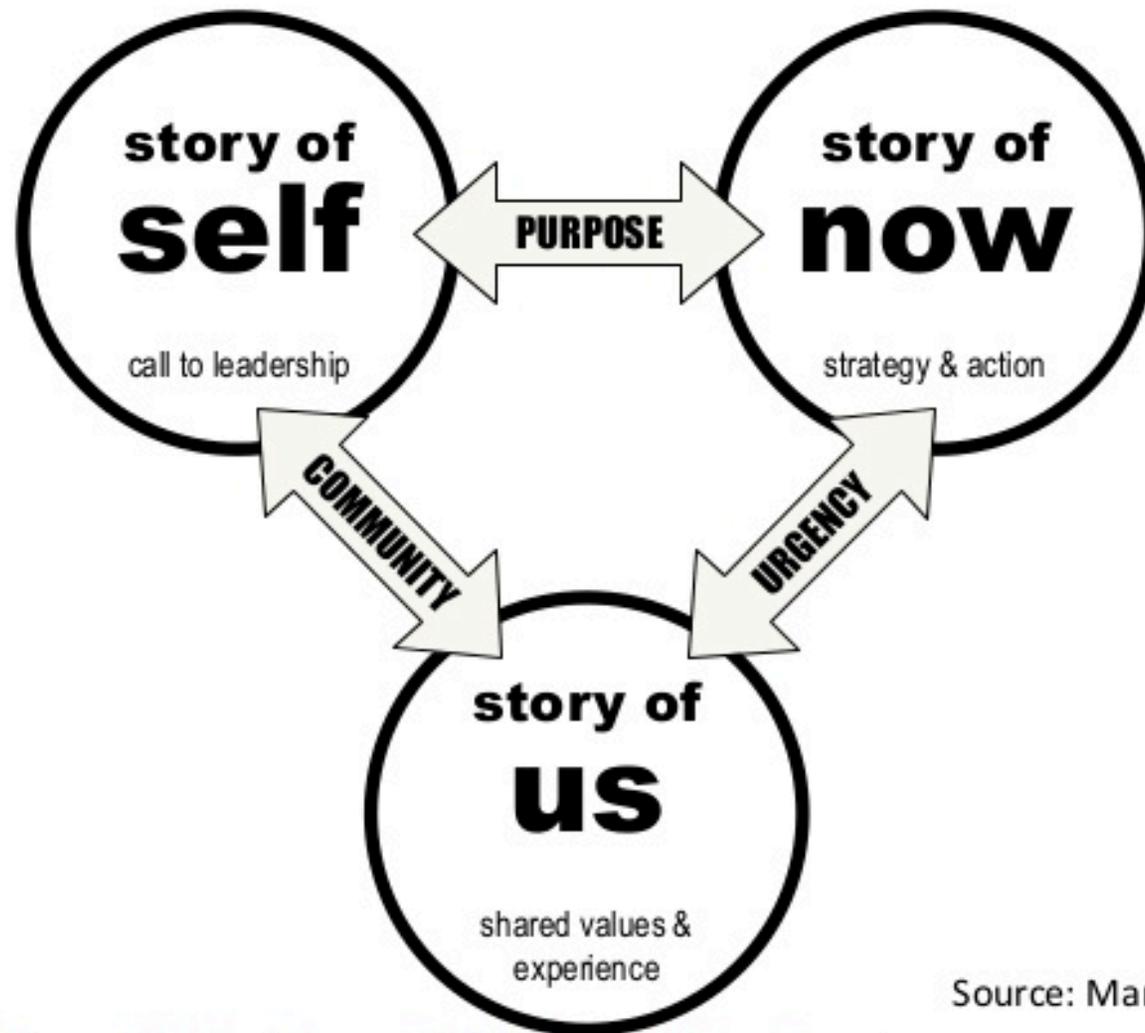


- It makes us less effective in our work when we are not communicating optimally, and getting people on board.
- The paradigm shift occurring in sustainability means getting serious about inclusivity, i.e. no more “experts.”



- The personal/professional divide is an artificial one, and we’re understanding the connections are vital to “authenticity.”

WHY DOES OVERCOMING THE “CURSE” MATTER?



Source: Marshall Ganz

Exercise



Story #2 questions:

- Was the “curse of knowledge” at work on this author?
 - If yes, how so? What was unclear to you as a reader?
- Were there any public narrative elements found in the story?
 - Story of me?
 - Story of us?
 - Story of now?