

# Keys to More Effective Verbal Communication

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Communicating with Policy Makers

WSSPC/CREW Workshop

2 May 2013



The facts are coming! The facts are coming!

# So What? Who Cares?





“What is it, boy? Want to go outside?”

# What Works with Communication

Connect on  
values

Craft a few  
key points

Beware of  
jargon

Use imagery,  
analogies,  
stories

Lead with  
what you  
know

Make your  
ideas  
accessible

Create a  
dialogue

Be prepared

## Terms that have different meanings for scientists and the public

Scientific term	Public meaning	Better choice
enhance	improve	intensify, increase
aerosol	spray can	tiny atmospheric particle
positive trend	good trend	upward trend
positive feedback	good response, praise	vicious cycle, self-reinforcing cycle
theory	hunch, speculation	scientific understanding
uncertainty	ignorance	range
error	mistake, wrong, incorrect	difference from exact true number
bias	distortion, political motive	offset from an observation
sign	indication, astrological sign	plus or minus sign
values	ethics, monetary value	numbers, quantity
manipulation	illicit tampering	scientific data processing
scheme	devious plot	systematic plan
anomaly	abnormal occurrence	change from long-term average

Hassol and Somerville, 2011, *Physics Today*

# Framing the discussion

Have an open discussion based around what matters to the office (find common ground)

- Economy/jobs?
- Energy independence?
- Health/Safety issues?
- National security?
- Local impacts?



Make that connection for them.

# Exercise

- Introduce Yourself – Elevator Speech
  - Name and affiliation
  - Program or area of research
  - Keep in under a minute
  
- The Ask
  - What are you asking for
  - What is the message