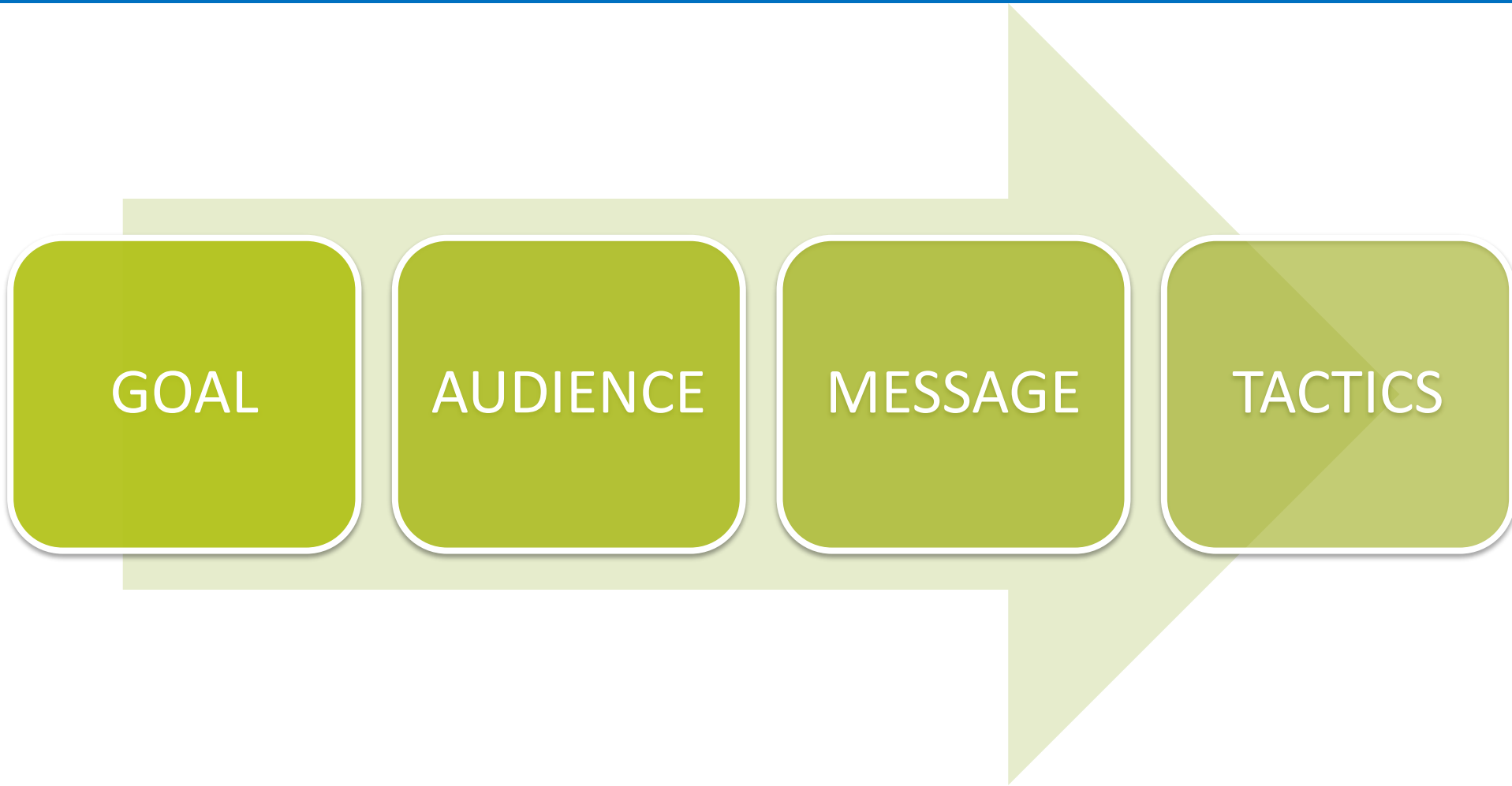
FULL COURT PRESS COMMUNICATIONS

Effective Communications

Caitlin Scott, Full Court Press Communications

Four Steps to a Communications Strategy



But First…

Natural disasters present unique and specific communications challenges

- Plan ahead
  - What can you do RIGHT NOW to prepare for the next disaster?
    - Who are your spokespeople?
    - Who are the organizational decision-makers?
    - What are your best methods of communication with your key constituency?
- During the crisis
  - Triage
    - What the "must do" items?
    - Save the "nice do" items for later.
  - BUT continue to be thoughtful
- When the initial crisis is past, continue strategizing.
  - Take a breathe and regroup
    - Look at bigger picture
    - Start thinking longer term response and recovery

Four Steps to a Communications Strategy

Start with Your Goal & Define Success

- Defining your communications goal is about defining success for your efforts

- BE SMART about your goals:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Realistic
  - Timely

Four Steps to a Communications Strategy

Why Are Target Audiences Important?

You can't convince everyone,

but you can:

- ***Empower*** your community
- ***Educate*** the unengaged
- ***Understand*** those who are ambivalent

Let's Brainstorm Target Audiences

Target Audiences:

- Landowners
- Elected Officials
- Area Residents
- Your Donors

How can you make these audiences more specific?

Examples of Target Audiences – Fire Response

"We want to educate local landowners on fire preparedness. To do this we want to reach out to agriculturalists in Santa Rosa who may need instructions on how to clear land of brush and other debris to reduce fire risks."

Four Steps to a Communications Strategy

What Are Key Messages? Why Are They Important?

- An few easily understandable statements (aim for 3) that tell a story to your target audience.
- Key messages should be:
  - Brief
  - Emotional
  - Relevant
  - Unique
  - Repeated
- Key messages help move people to **take action**

Let’s Explore an Example – Key Messages

- PROBLEM
- SOLUTION
- IMPACT

Storytelling – The Importance of Anecdotes

- Storytelling is common thread through all cultures
- Humanizing – Anecdotes are a way of personalizing the issue
- Impact – Anecdotes are a way for audience to understand your perspective – more powerful than text of your remarks
- Linkage – A story can personalize an issue much faster than reciting statistics, historical facts or personal biases.
- Credibility – anecdotes allow you to "borrow" someone else's credibility

Four Steps to a Communications Strategy

Tactics

- Now that you have your messaging; what do you do with it?
- Go to where your audience is; meet them where they are.
- Who is your most effective messenger?

Tactics – Potential Tactics

Earned Media

- Call a reporter for an informational conversation
- Send photos or video to local reporters
- Pitch a story
- Send out a press release (IF you have news)
- Place an op-ed
- Submit a letter to the editor

Attend and Host Meetings

- Attend group meetings (Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- Host a community roundtable

Social Media

- Post regularly
- Consider “boosted” posts
- Engage your community

How Communicating about Fire is Unique

- Be sensitive to the trauma.
- Let people come to you.
- Have a plan.
- What is your “only we”?
- Prepare for the questions you pray don’t get asked.

FULL COURT PRESS COMMUNICATIONS

Caitlin Scott
Full Court Press Communications
caitlin@fcpcommunications.com
510-550-8176
@fullcourtpress / @caityscott
www.fcpcommunications.com