



SCICOMM

Communication strategies to increase your impact

**John Meyer, University of Washington College of the Environment
Jai Ranganathan, SciFund Challenge**

WHY ARE WE EVEN TALKING ABOUT SCICOMM?

- > Sharing science has IMPACT
 - informs decisions and helps us make sense of our world
- > Scientists' voices play a unique and critical role
- > More and more scientists want to share their work





KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- 1) KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE**
- 2) CREATING MESSAGES THAT STICK**

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “AUDIENCE”?



A group of people that are alike with regard to a specific set of concerns and interests (they may be very different in every other aspect)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “AUDIENCE”?



A group of people that are alike with regard to a specific set of concerns and interests (they may be very different in every other aspect)

Other scientists

Journalists

Policy makers

Donors

Family

Students

Public

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “AUDIENCE”?



A group of people that are alike with regard to a specific set of concerns and interests (they may be very different in every other aspect)

Other scientists

Journalists

Policy makers

Donors

Family

Students

Public

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

AUDIENCE: SCIENTISTS



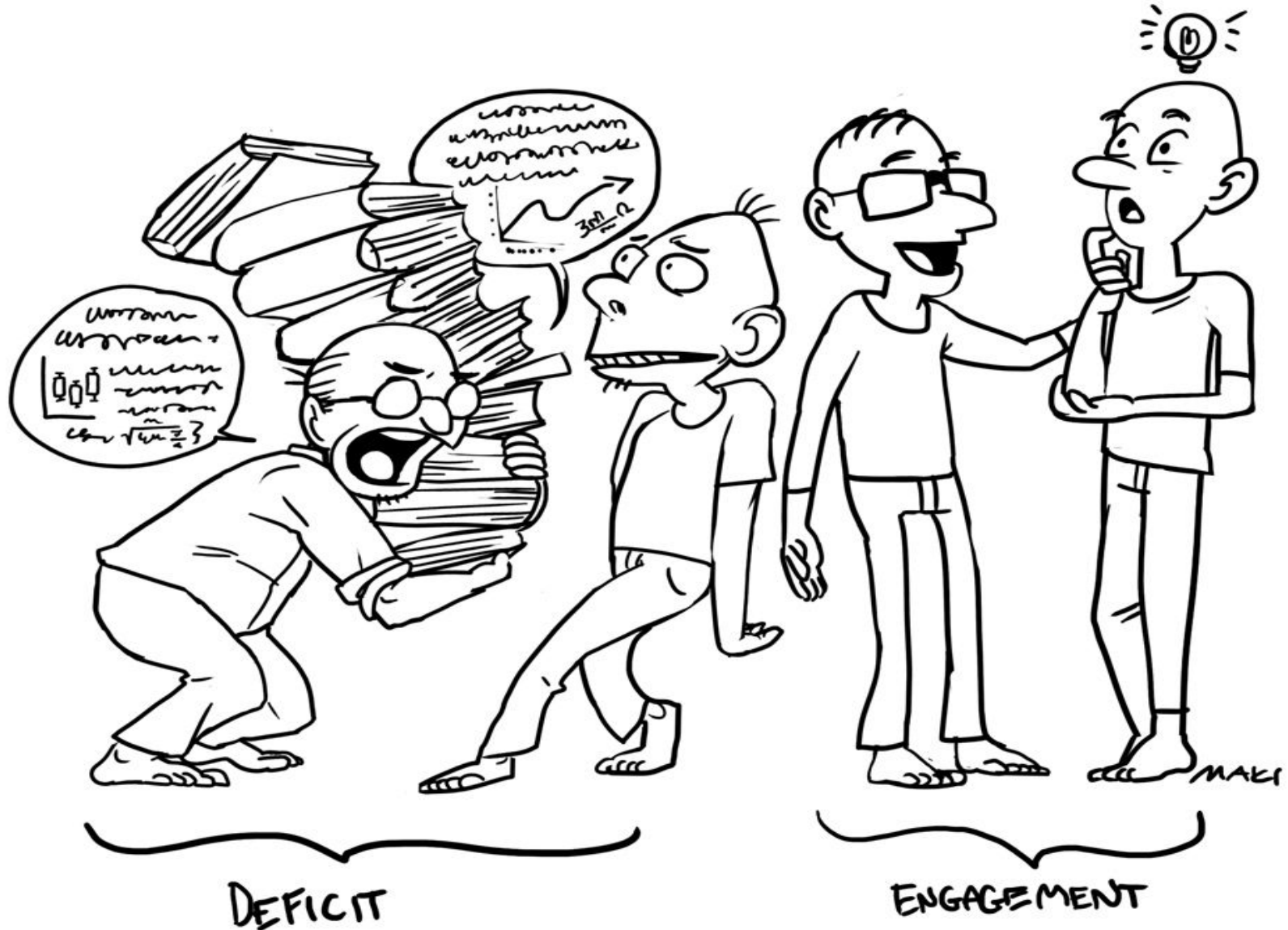
- > What is important to scientists?
- > What are their values, interests, concerns?
- > What pressures do they face?
- > What do they need from you?

AUDIENCE: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGERS



- > What is important to natural resource managers?
- > What are their values, interests, concerns?
- > What pressures do they face?
- > What do they need from you?

WE ALL HAVE SOME LEARNING TO DO

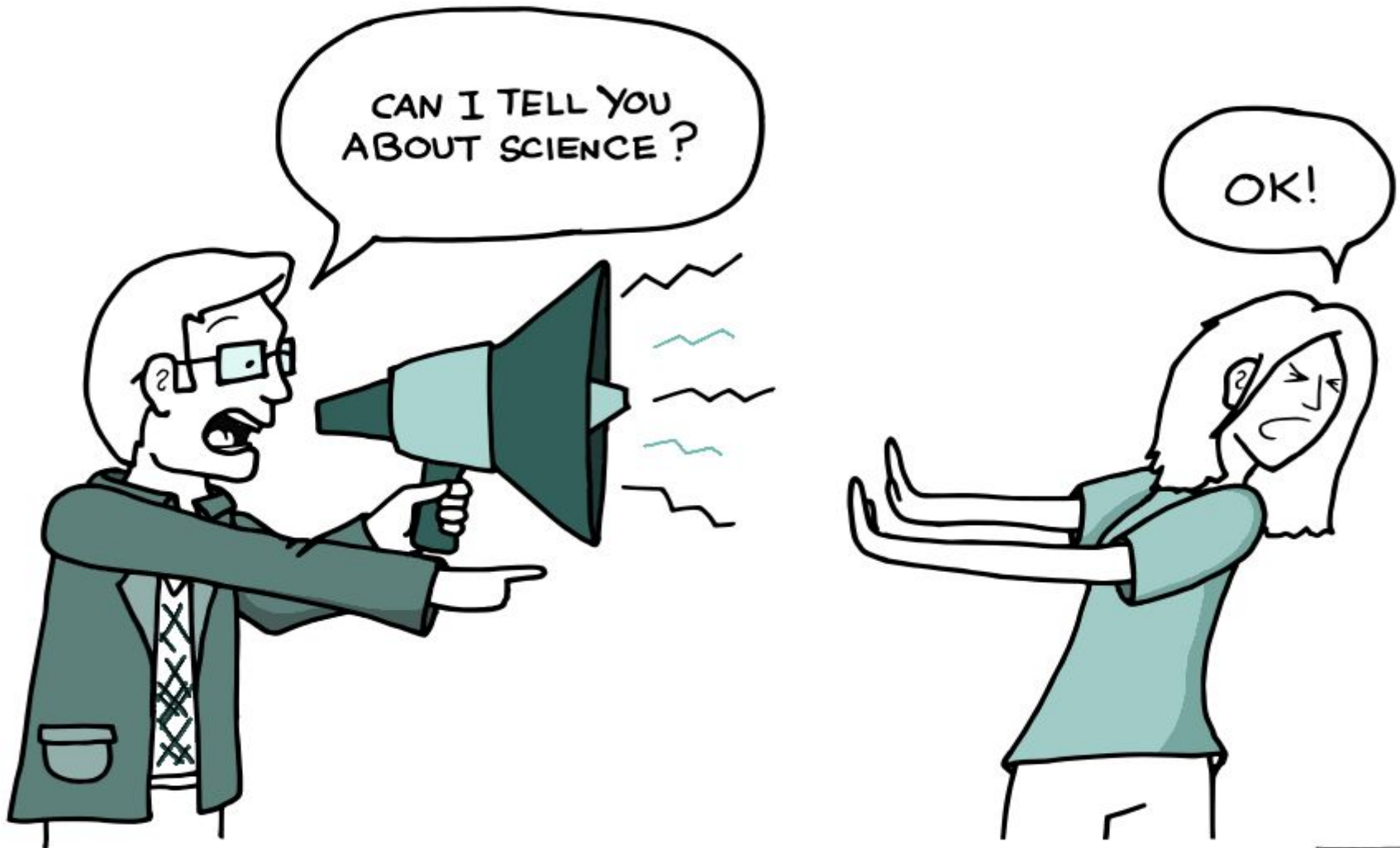


THINK ABOUT YOUR MESSAGE..

- > What is a message anyway?
 - A communication process that shares information through words, images and other language
- > Intended to lead audience to action



HUMANS: DON'T LOVE BEING TALKED AT



HUMANS: SOMETIMES IRRATIONAL



HUMANS: DISTRACTED



HUMANS: NEED TO RELATE



*"I don't know why I don't care about the bottom
of the ocean, but I don't."*

Charles Saxon in *The New Yorker*,
3/21/83

MESSAGE

SO
WHAT?

Legislators

How much political capital will I have to spend on this? Do voters care?

Managers

What will it cost? Who supports this?

NGOs

How does this fit into our agenda?

Scientists

Is it true? Is it robust? How does it affect my work?

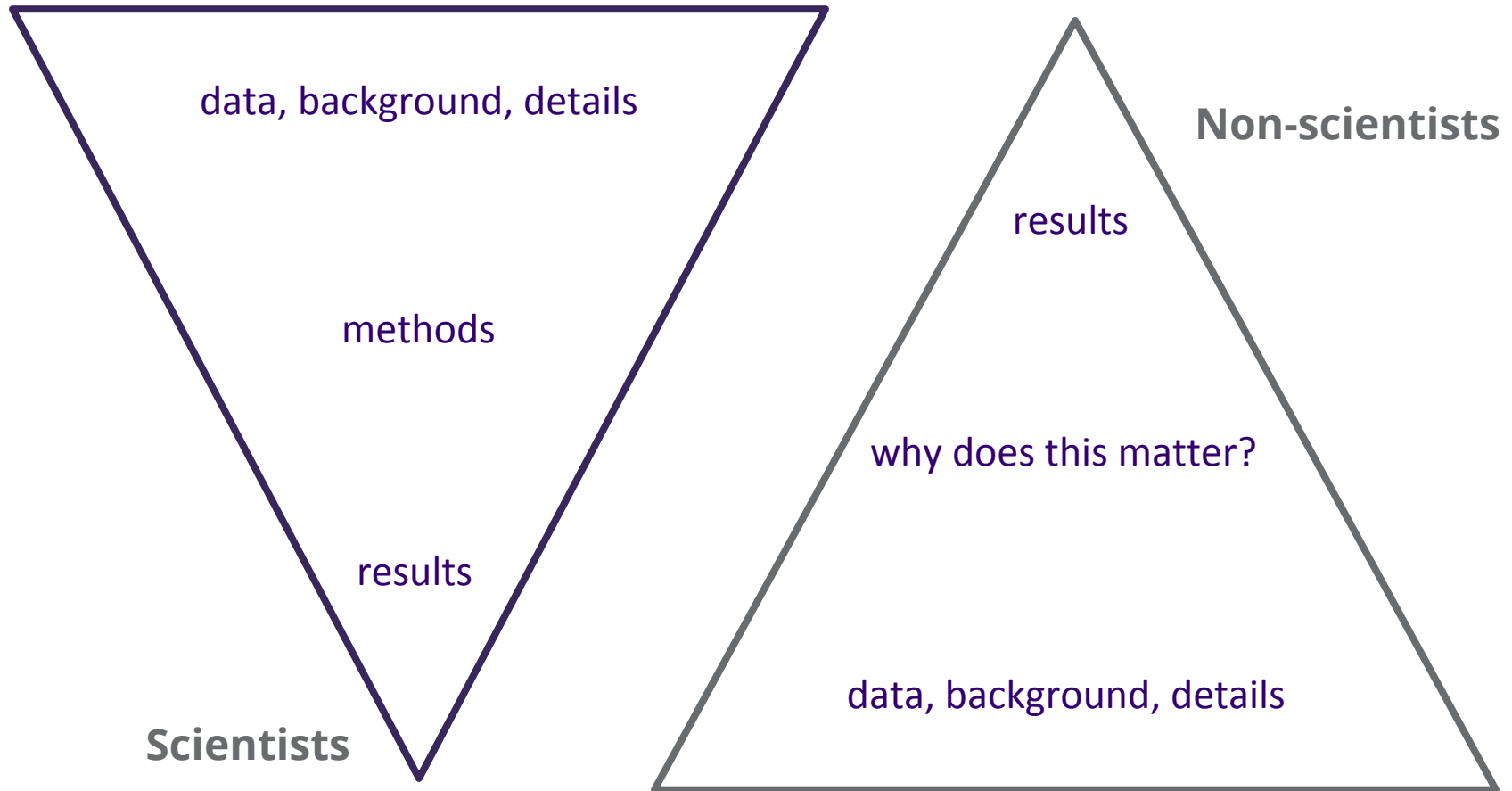
Media

Is it news? Will it sell?

Everyone

Why does this matter to ME?

ADJUST YOUR STORYTELLING



GOOD MESSAGES...

...build connections

- > Invite your audience into conversation
 - Get rid of jargon
 - It's not "dumbing down"
- > Share about yourself to connect to their:
 - Values
 - Interests
 - Concerns
- > Help people see themselves in your story

GOOD MESSAGES...

...find compelling “hooks”

- > Is this unexpected or novel in some way?
- > Is it timely? Why are you telling this story now?
- > Was/is there tension or drama?
- > Does it have a hero? A victim? A villain?
- > Can it follow a narrative structure?

GOOD MESSAGES...

...lead to an action

- > Attract new/increased funding?
- > Assist in policymaking?
- > Change behavior?
- > Increase society's value of science?

ALL SORTS OF WAYS TO ENGAGE

- > K-12 outreach
- > Mentoring students
- > Sharing your data
- > Building new partnerships with business
- > Inspiring interested audiences
- > Informing natural resource policy
- > Connecting with NGOs
- > Developing a web and social media presence
- > Talking to journalists
- > Writing books/blogs/articles for broad consumption

BEFORE YOU JUMP... QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- > What is my goal?
- > What role do I want to play? What's my comfort level?
- > What are my institution's goals? Where do I distinguish myself from my institution?

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: ATTENTION ABOVE ALL

- > Underlying philosophy of plan: attention of your audience can't be taken for granted
- > No guarantee that audience that starts paying attention will continue doing so

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: ATTENTION ABOVE ALL

An attention mini-exercise...

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: ATTENTION ABOVE ALL

- > holding attention of audience depends on accurate definition and understanding of that group
- > social media great way to define and understand audience

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: VALUE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



Kim Kardashian West ✓

@KimKardashian

@KKWBEAUTY @KKWFRAGRANCE



🔗 KKWBEAUTY.COM

📅 Joined March 2009

Tweets Tweets & replies Media



Kim Kardashian West ✓ @KimKardashian · 27m



KhloeKardashianFans.com @

KOKO 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

more pics: khloekardashianfan

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: VALUE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes
29K	144	60M	9

Kim Kardashian West ✓

@KimKardashian

@KKWBEAUTY @KKWFRAGRANCE



KKWBEAUTY.COM

Joined March 2009

Tweets Tweets & replies Media



Kim Kardashian West ✓ @KimKardashian · 27m



KhloeKardashianFans.com @

KOKO

more pics: khloekardashianfan

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: VALUE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: A SOCIAL MEDIA FOCUS GROUP

- > Goal: to keep continual tabs on your audience, create a list of 10-15 representative social media accounts
- > Use the social media platform where your audience can be found

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: FINDING REPRESENTATIVE ACCOUNTS

On Twitter (for example):

- > Is there a prominent person or organization associated with your audience?
- > Who does that person/org follow and reference?
- > With that person/org what hashtags come up?
- > Can you guess hashtags used by audience?
- > Stay away from primarily promotional accounts

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: FINDING REPRESENTATIVE ACCOUNTS

no result is positive answer

- > The definition of your audience you have defined may need to be redefined
 - o Common not-great audience definition:
“people who read the New York Times”
- > Your audience may be congregating someplace else

CRAFTING YOUR OWN COMMS PLAN: A SOCIAL MEDIA FOCUS GROUP

- > Creating your focus group is slow work
- > Once you have group, keep a continual eye on the interests and concerns being brought up
- > Frame your science messaging within these interests and concerns



QUESTIONS?