“Communicating Sustainability”
Counting Carbon Workshop

Horizon Scotland, March 24, 2011
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What are your problems with expressing the carbon management issue to...
What are your problems with expressing the carbon management issue to...

- Stakeholders
- Employees
- the news media
- ...the general public?
Communicating carbon management – challenges
Communicating carbon management – challenges

• Widespread skepticism
Communicating carbon management – challenges

• Widespread skepticism
• Unclear standards/measures
Communicating carbon management – challenges

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- Unclear standards/measures
- Technical complexity
Communicating carbon management – challenges

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• Technical complexity
• Lack of verifiable results
Communicating carbon management – challenges

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Communicating carbon management – challenges

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- No urgency for compliance
Communicating carbon management – challenges

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• Unclear standards/measures
• Technical complexity
• Lack of verifiable results
• Seems expensive and not profitable
• Untested technologies
• No urgency for compliance
• “We will all be dead anyway”
Communicating carbon management – opportunities

• Demand for new technologies
• Job growth
• Drives innovation and technological development
• Resource potential in Scotland
• Markets for surplus energy and water
• “Do something good” – real substance and change
Communicating carbon management – opportunities

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• “Do something good” – real substance and change
Effective communication
Information
Information communication
Information is communication
Information is not communication
Information is not communication

Communication is
Information is not communication.

Communication is perception.
It's not what you know,
It’s not what you know,
...but how you express it,
It’s not what you know,
...but how you express it,
...that is decisive in your audience understanding it.
Expressing ideas in terms of “shared values” has impact on audiences.
What’s the #1 shared value?
FEAR OF DEATH
FEAR OF DEATH

HOPES

STEREOTYPES & PRECONCEPTIONS

DREAMS
FEAR OF DEATH

HOPES

DISAPPOINTMENTS

STEREOTYPES & PRECONCEPTIONS

DREAMS

CULTURE
FEAR OF DEATH
HOPES
RELIGION
DISAPPOINTMENTS
STEREOTYPES & PRECONCEPTIONS
DREAMS
CULTURE
What are the shared values of...

Stakeholders
Employees
the news media
...the general public?
What are the shared values of... the news media?
What are the shared values of... the news media?

Competitive

Skeptical of government, business, and institutions

“Never trust a PR person” is a common attitude

News is both public service and big business

Very aware of their audience
What are the shared values of... the general public?
What are the shared values of... the general public?

Something that touches their lives directly

Something new, unusual, or breaks stereotypes

An unforgettable image, sound, or moment

Humanity and human emotion
What are the shared values of... employees?
What are the shared values of... employees?

“Identity”

Teamwork

Pride/Creativity/Innovation

Problem solving

Income generation and job security
What are the shared values of... stakeholders?
Who are… “stakeholders?”

- Customers
- Investors
- Insurance companies
- Government
- Your board
What are the shared values of... stakeholders?
What are the shared values of... stakeholders?

What is your baseline carbon footprint?

What is your GHG strategy?

What is the scope and boundaries of your accounting?

What are your goals and targets?
Different audiences...

Stakeholders
Employees
the news media
...the general public

...demand different messages.
Different audiences...

Stakeholders
Employees
the news media
...the general public

...demand different messages.

Connecting issues with shared values resonates.
Expressing ideas effectively

• Think in advance what you want to say
• Think about what interests you personally
• What interests you will interest your target audience
Expressing ideas effectively

Prioritize and choose:

• Think in advance about what you want to say
• Think about what interests you personally
• What interests you will interest your target audience
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

**Put it in context**

- Challenge what you think is obvious

*Consider:* your target audience may have no idea about what you consider “common knowledge”
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

"Describe parenthetically"

1) Cite your technical term “…carbon dioxide (C0₂)"

2) Parenthetically: “…that’s the most important greenhouse gas. It comes from fuel combustion, changes in land use, and industrial processes.”
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

**Analyses and metaphors**

Use everyday examples from real life:

“...a fireplace without a chimney.”
“...a house without window glass.”
“...the ecological great recession.”
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

**Comparisons**

"If you put the annual UK budget for space research into the NHS, how long would it last?"

(Answer: 16 hours)

"What we spent on entire carbon management program was less than the cost of upgrading our accounting software …"
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

Comparisons

"If you put the annual UK budget for space research into the NHS, how long would it last?” (Answer: 16 hours)
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

**Comparisons**

"If you put the annual UK budget for space research into the NHS, how long would it last?" (Answer: 16 hours)

“What we spent on entire carbon management program was less than the cost of upgrading our accounting software …”
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

**Prove relevance**

“...more efficiency.”
“...increase profitability.”
“...innovation.”
“...create new jobs.”
“...lower costs.”
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

**Break stereotypes and preconceptions**

“...cutting the carbon footprint saved us money.”
“...carbon management is a new revenue stream.”
“...here’s what we thought we knew. Here’s what amazed us.”
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

**Shared values**

1. Understand what is important to your audience (all audiences are different)

2. Connect your issues with the shared values of your audience
Body language
Body language

Effective speakers believe in what they are saying
Body language

- Body language is a “mirror”
Body language

- Body language is a “mirror”
- Eye contact = commitment
Body language

- Body language is a “mirror”
- Eye contact = commitment
- Convey your humanity
Clothing and appearance

- Match your clothing to the occasion
- Conservative and simple
- Check hair before start
- Details count
Your appearance should not draw attention away from your message
Expressing ideas effectively: how to say it

Create a simple presentation

• Designed for audiences who don’t know "anything"
• Minimize slides (NOT from an existing presentation)
• 20 minutes maximum
• Q & A: express your passion and your humanity
Persuasion
Persuasion
Persuasion

• Charisma (gr. Kharis) = “grace”
Persuasion

- Charisma (gr. Kharis) = “grace”

- Self confidence (not just job confidence)
Persuasion

- *Charisma (gr. Kharis) = “grace”*

- Self confidence (not just job confidence)

- Comfort (making others comfortable)
Persuasion

- Charisma (*gr. Kharis*) = “grace”
- Self confidence (not just job confidence)
- Comfort (making others comfortable)
- Goal/purpose/mission
Persuasion

The willingness to take risks
Persuasion

The willingness to take risks

- Open
- Human
- Vulnerable
- Approachable
**Persuasion**

The willingness to take risks
- Open
- Human
- Vulnerable
- Approachable

...despite depth of experience and level of expertise
Responding to the skeptics

• When the skeptic says – “...you don’t know what you are talking about.”
• Remind them – “…actually, I do know what I am talking about.”
Responding to the skeptics

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Responding to the skeptics

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Responding to the skeptics

Provide specifics

• “Without carbon management we won’t have…”

• “A company just like ours took these steps and…”

• “We are now required under Section 2.3 of the government regulation…”
Responding to the skeptics

*Provide your CV*

- Why you are qualified to speak
- What you have done specifically
- What you have seen others do
Responding to the skeptics

The combination of humour and self-assurance can be very persuasive.
Stories and storytelling
Stories and storytelling

Beginning
Stories and storytelling

Beginning

Middle
Stories and storytelling

Beginning

Middle

End
Stories and storytelling

Beginning  Character
Middle     Conflict
End        Resolution
Stories and storytelling

Stories are never about big issues.
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Stories are always about how ordinary people are affected by big issues.
Stories are never about big issues.

Stories are always about how ordinary people are affected by big issues.

Not “what” the story is about... but “who” the story is about
Stories and storytelling

“What if it was me?”
Effective communications strategy

Target audiences:
• Stakeholders
• Employees
• The news media
• The general public

...choose just one or two.
Effective communications strategy

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Effective communications strategy

For each audience identify:

• Specific concerns and fears
• How you will address those fears
• Keep it short and to the point
Effective communications strategy

Articulate:

• The target audience’s interests
• Your organization’s motivations
• Your broad objectives
• Your specific goals
Effective communications strategy

- Think about your audience
- Understand what is important to them
- Express ideas in ways they understand
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