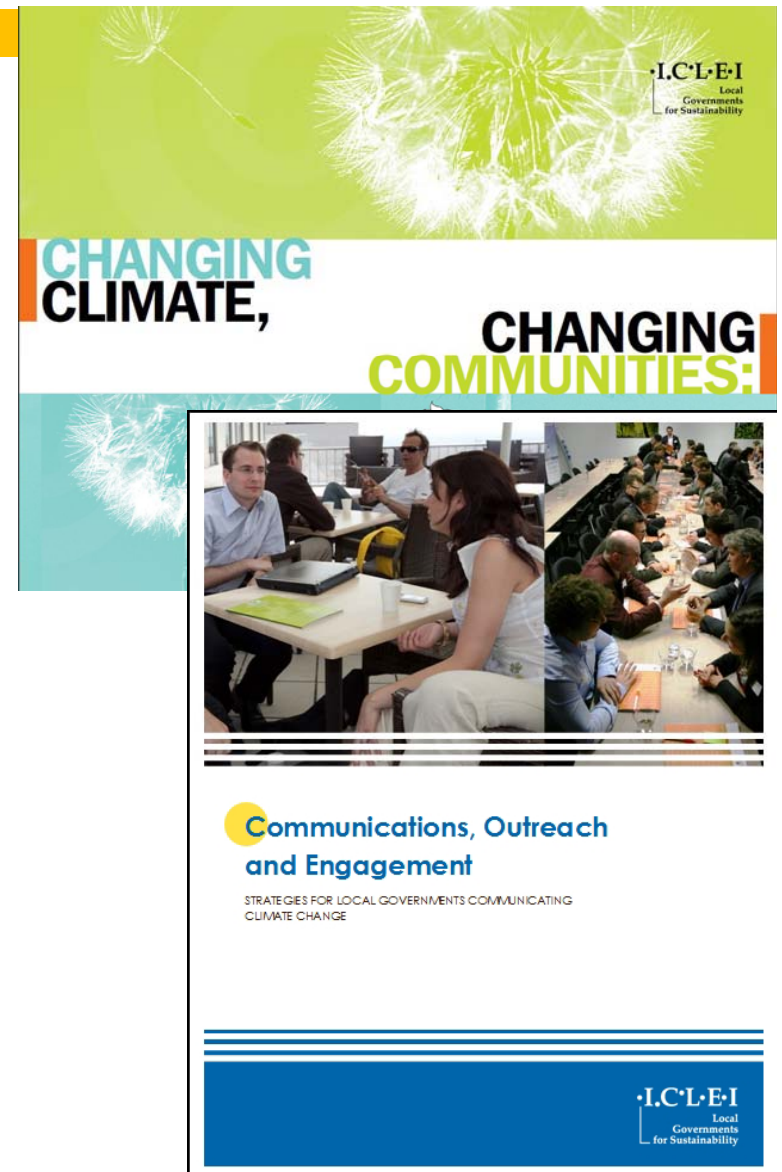




TRANSLATING CLIMATE SCIENCE:
COMMUNICATING CLIMATE
CHANGE TO MUNICIPALITIES

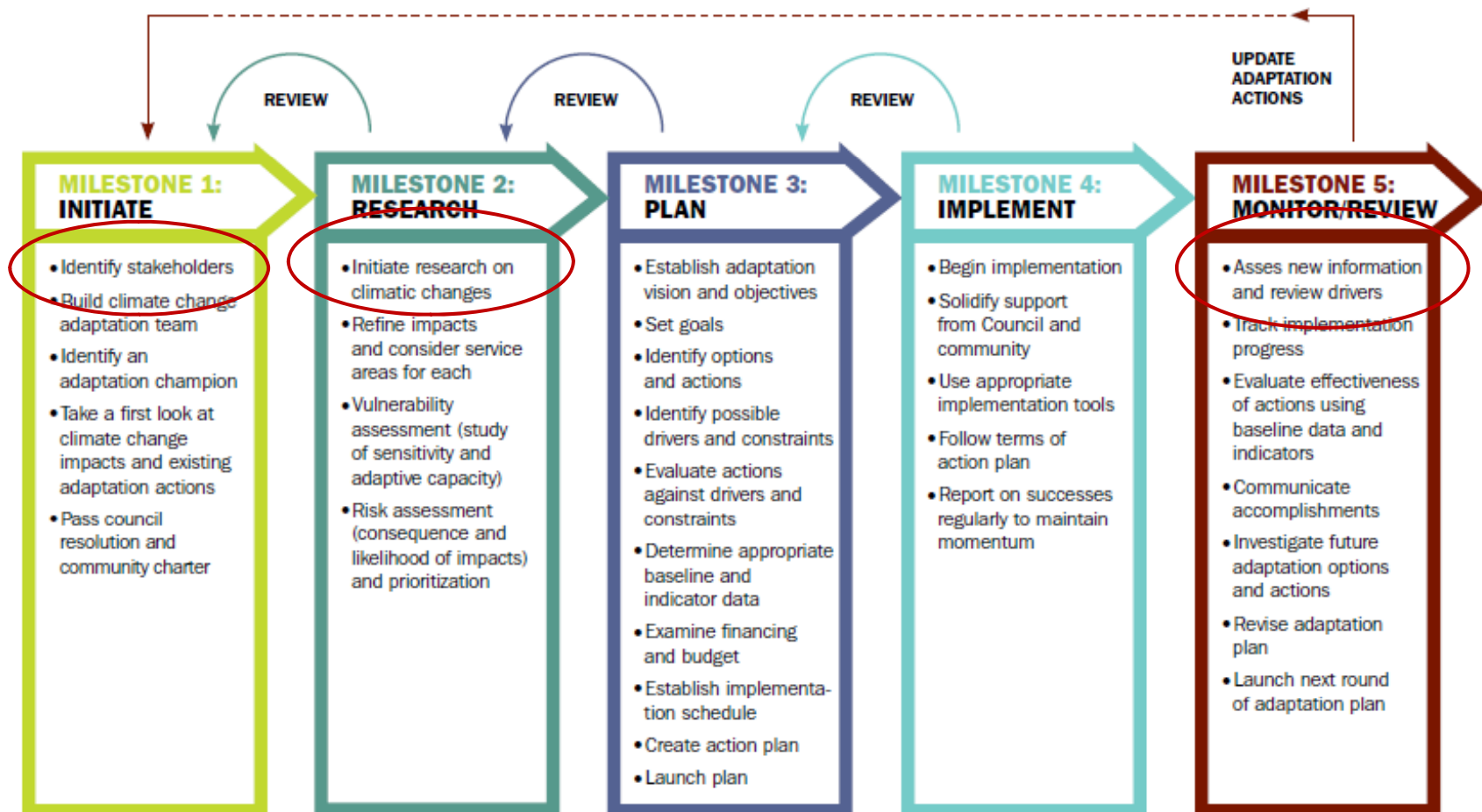
About ICLEI

- Membership association of 1,225 local governments worldwide
- Program work in climate change response, urban biodiversity, water, sustainability management, and stakeholder engagement
- Adaptation Initiative – 20 communities from across Canada
- Decision support tools and resources: Adaptation planning guide, training resources, communications resources, and database of adaptation measures



Providers – Extension Agents - Users

What are the points of communication between the above groups?



Two thoughts on climate communication

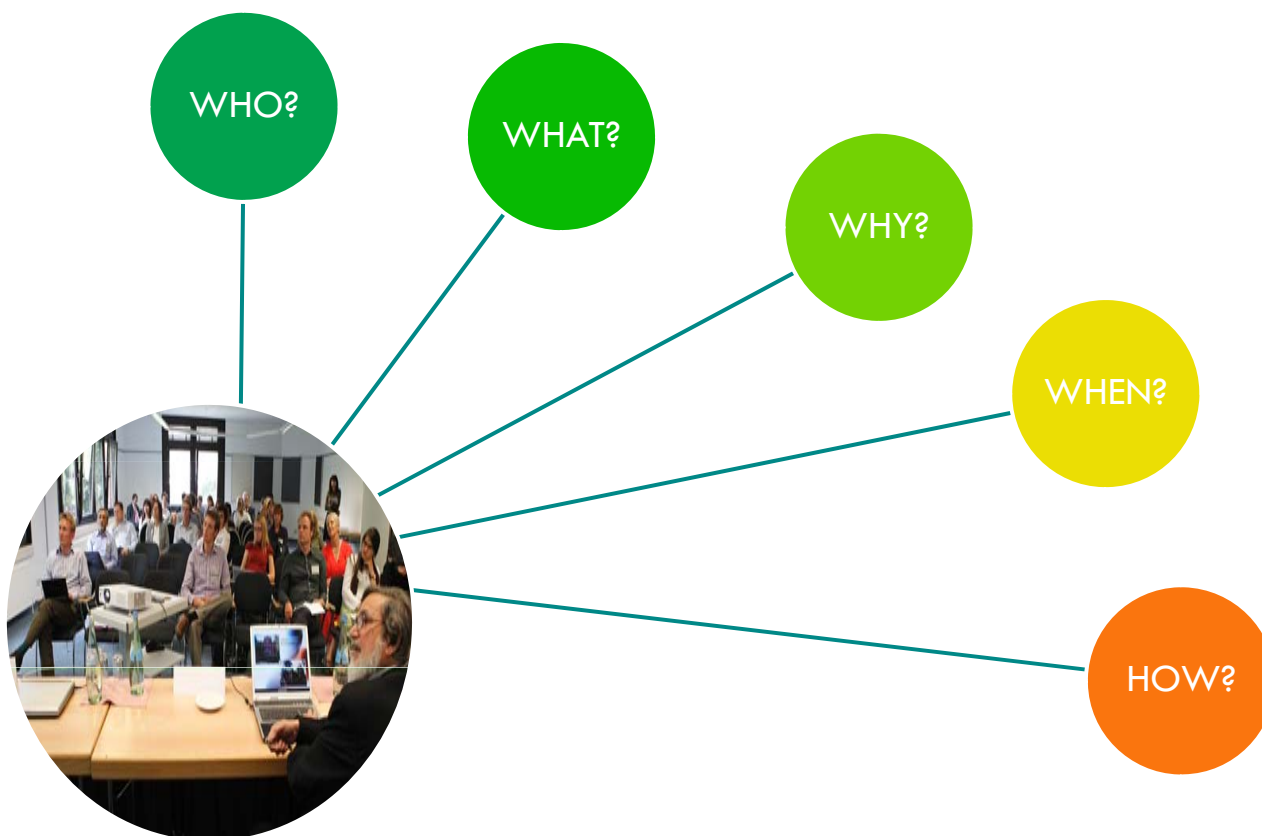
Climate communication is not about winning debates, but building relationships.

People are not motivated by a global, abstract, intellectual issue, but they are motivated by issues that resonate emotionally.



Communications Primer

Perhaps an easier way to think about it is to follow the same as the basic rules of journalism or marketing – need to answer the “the big five”.



Three Cities – Three Different Messages

The naysayers

- Do not acknowledge climate change as an area of concern
- Environmental action seen as unnecessary spending and not prioritized, at times funding cut
- Actions to prepare for climate change not on the agenda

The opportunists

- Acknowledge that climate change is an area of concern
- Environmental action prioritized when associated opportunities presented
- Actions to prepare for climate change on agenda when they are “win-win”

The early adopters

- Climate change is a priority and local action is necessary
- Environmental action made a priority and funds allocated accordingly
- Actions to prepare for climate change are included and part of broad policy

WHO?

- Know you`re audience and make sure you are speaking their language
- Find credible messengers, who speak the language of your audience and share their values

The naysayers

- Audience not receptive to “climate change” discourse
- Bring onside partners (risk managers, economists, insurers)
- Utilize unconventional partners and allies

The opportunists

- Audience (and Council) that need to know the numbers
- Work with groups that can present the opportunities with climate change action (BIAs, commerce, key dept. heads)

The early adopters

- Audience who are keen to act and see the importance
- Bring onside experts that can present the latest information and forecasts directly (PCIC, UBC CALP, etc.)

WHAT?

- Choose the most effective frames to talk about climate change action:
 - Community resilience
 - Public health / quality of life
 - Economic prosperity
 - Sustainability / Triple bottom line
 - Stewardship
 - Innovation

The naysayers

- Risk aversion
- Emergency preparedness

The opportunists

- Job creation
- Energy savings

The early adopters

- Climate change protection
- Stewardship of the land

WHY?

- Be clear as to why you are engaging people.
- What is your communications goal.
 - To gather feedback?
 - To increase awareness of an issue?
 - To mobilize action or participation in a program?
- Be clear about what you're asking of people before you engage them.

The naysayers

- Council to put climate preparedness on the agenda (without necessarily labelling it as climate change)

The opportunists

- Get buy-in to implement specific projects and actions

The early adopters

- Assign dollars and identify timelines
- Enable Mayor and Council to become climate champions

WHEN?

- Choose the opportunities for communication that fit your audience
- Use weather events as opportunities to communicate
- Be aware of how various communication arenas can be used to help strengthen your message

The naysayers

- Use recent weather events as catalysts for action
- Mutli-actor workshops / PPPs

The opportunists

- Annual budget and workplan cycles to integrate climate action with other work streams
- Interdepartmental working groups

The early adopters

- Use consensus in city to branch out into the community
- Citizen advisory committees / focus groups

HOW?

- To be successful be careful of not making climate change a politically one-sided issue
- Compelling evidence of existing local climate impacts
- **Use language that will resonate with your audience** (language which may or may not directly refer to the term “climate change”)

The naysayers

- Avoid the “doom and gloom”
- Give examples that work
- Disaster risk reduction

The opportunists

- Use triple bottom line approach
- Highlight low-cost, low-risk actions and the benefits they bring
- Resilience

The early adopters

- Continue presenting new information and solutions
- Climate change adaptation
- Visualization**

Five basic guidelines for translating climate information for municipalities

- Guideline #1: Know your audience so that you can target your messages to them
- Guideline #2: Be aware of how peoples' values shape their beliefs on climate change
- Guideline #3: To capture your audience's attention talk about climate impacts in local, immediate terms
- Guideline #4: Emphasize the power and practicality of local climate solutions, especially community preparedness
- Guideline #5: Address climate science in a simple, compelling way, and stress the certainties of what we know



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Local
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