

Strategic Communications

The Importance of Message

Presentation for
**The National Community Centers of
Excellence in Women's Health**

April 10, 2006

Being Memorable

You get one shot.

Don't plan on another.



Developing Your Message

What is Message?

- | Message is the crux of the matter – the reason why anyone should care about your organization
- | It must be clear, accurate and short

Developing Your Message

Your Message Should:

- | Tell us the problem – give context
- | Tell us a story or provide vivid examples
- | Tell us about solutions
- | Tell us what we can do to help

Examples of Message

| “Too many Americans die alone, in pain, and attached to machines.”

–From the \$20 million SUPPORT study

| “Thousands of Americans die and get sicker because of medical errors.”

–From the Institute of Medicine

| “More than anything, parental connectedness is the greatest protector against drugs, alcohol, and early sex for children in the teen years.”

–From the ADD HEALTH study

| “We have a grossly inadequate public health infrastructure. I sometimes feel we’re trying to run the O’Hare airport control tower with tin cans and strings.”

–Michael Osterholm, Minnesota epidemiologist

Delivering Your Message

- | Develop talking points for all spokespeople.
- | Use succinct “real life” examples from the field to add texture to your comments.
- | Narrow your message to no more than three points.
- | Avoid jargon that an average reader or listener doesn't know.