

Messaging to Keep Kids Coverage on the Agenda



Elizabeth Curwen
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The Narrative Project



Results

- Policy wins
- Message resonance
- Increased capacity and impact



EVALUATION BRIEF

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The Narrative Communications Project: Takeaway Findings on a Message-Framing Approach

Sheila Hoag, Victoria Peebles, and Christopher Trenholm,
Foreword by Gene Lewit, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Executive Summary

In 2004, staff from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation—recognizing both opportunities for, and risks to, children’s health insurance coverage in states—began developing a grant program with a strategic communications firm, Spitfire Strategies. Using input from a number of nationally recognized experts to inform the effort, the program was designed to help state-based advocates promote children’s health insurance coverage and coverage expansion more effectively and build the consensus needed to accelerate progress on children’s health insurance coverage. This collaboration resulted in the Narrative Communications (Narrative) Project, a communications capacity-building grant project sponsored by the Packard Foundation and implemented in partnership with Spitfire. Implemented across an initial 11 states in 2006, the Narrative Project combined modest grant support to state-based advocates with intensive, targeted technical assistance to grantees on effective communications and messaging.

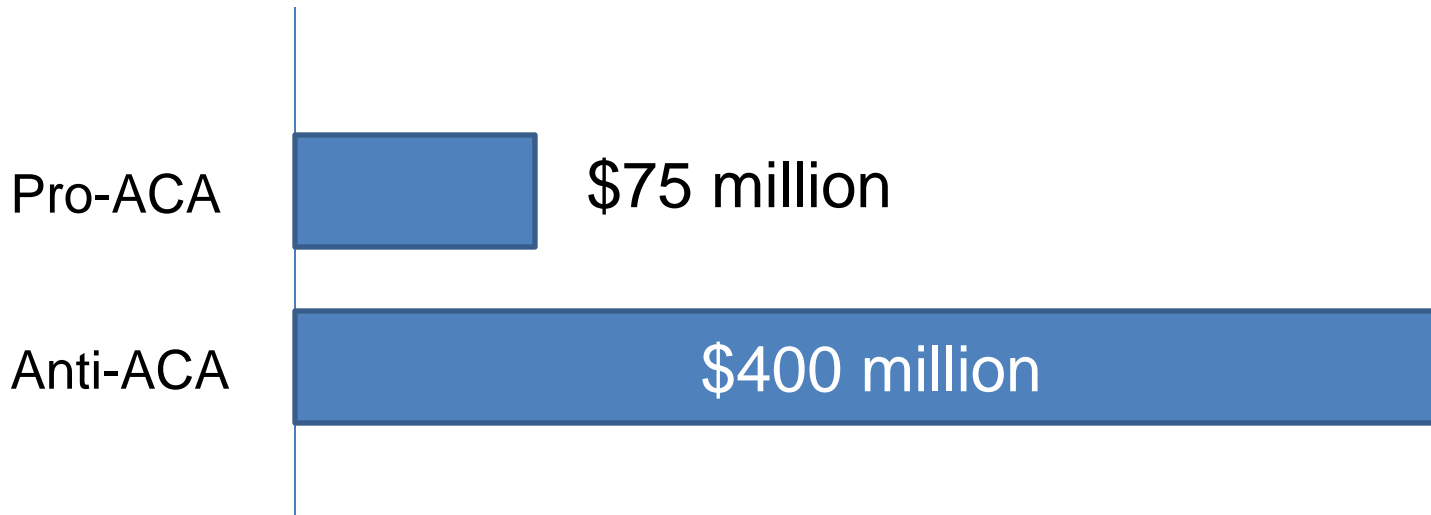
To document key lessons from the Narrative Project and whether/how the grant program may have affected the work of the state-based advocates, researchers from Mathematica and the Urban Institute conducted semistructured interviews with staff from 15 of the 16 Narrative grantee projects. Findings from the study offer substantial evidence that it achieved these aims by strengthening grantees’ capacity for, and effectiveness at, advocating for children’s coverage. All 15 Narrative grantees interviewed reported that they achieved the broad aims of the Narrative, and 73 percent cited specific policy wins as evidence. These wins included helping to stymie efforts to cut children’s coverage in their state and to promote successful expansions in coverage. Eight of the 15 grantees also reported that the Narrative had helped them shift the media and public discourse on children’s coverage in their state to a more positive framing of the issue, enabling them to talk about how coverage programs were working, rather than where they were weak. Two-thirds of respondents believed that their organizations have been able to sustain at least some of the communications capacities built through the project, continuing the growth in advocacy capacity on children’s issues that it had begun.

The economy is still in recovery, and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act is imminent. Therefore, many continue to believe that effective state-based advocacy is vital to ensuring that all children and adults have access to quality health care coverage (Grantmakers in Health 2010; Community Catalyst 2012; Strong et al. 2011). Findings from this study of the Narrative show the importance of strategic investments in making such advocacy possible, as well as lessons for advocates and funders in the value of message framing and an advocacy strategy rooted in a positive, “glass-half-full” approach.



Paid Messages in the Media

Television Ad Spending Since 2010



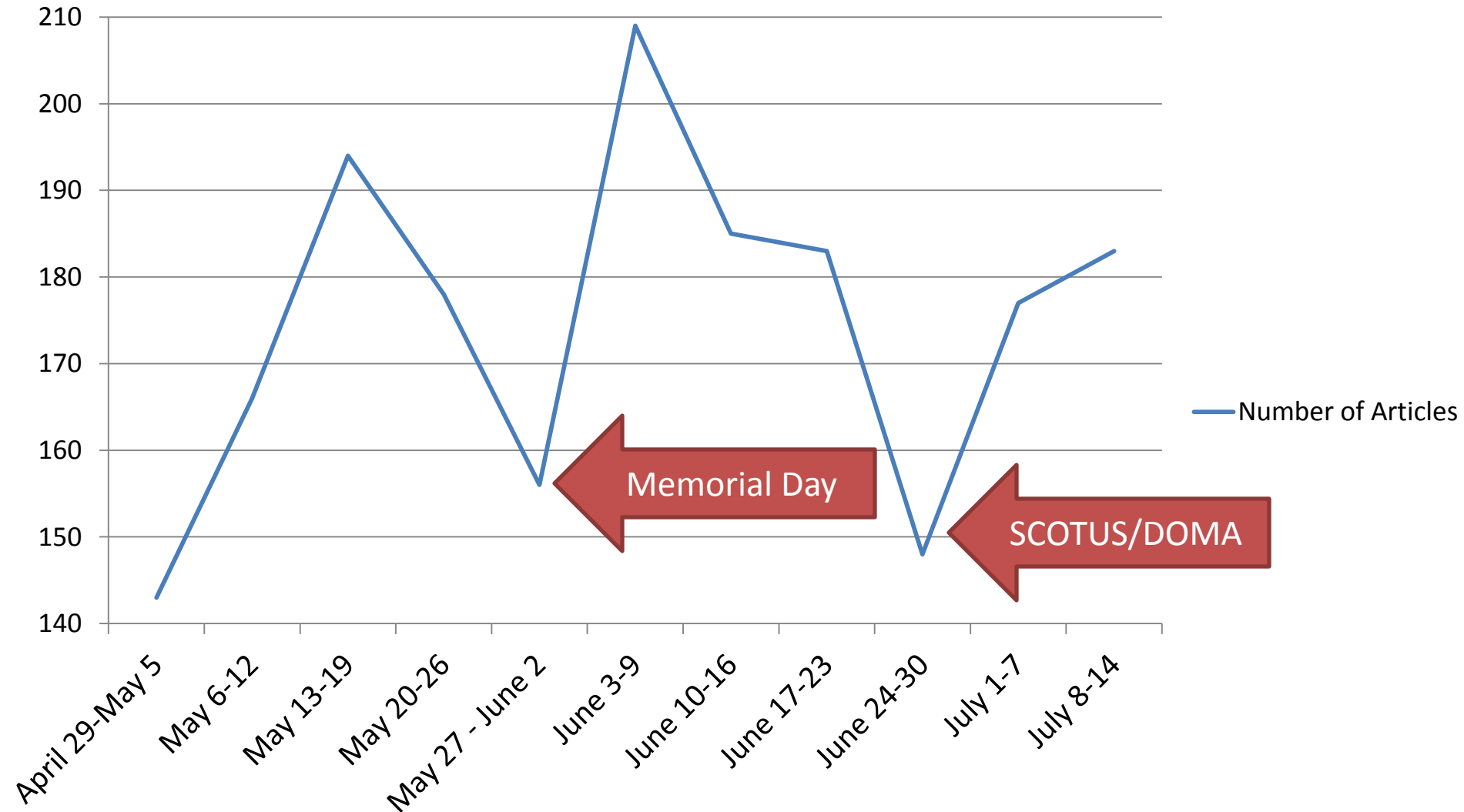
Tone of Earned Media Coverage

A photograph of Barack Obama signing a document, surrounded by several people in a formal setting. The image is dimly lit and serves as a background for the text.

- Generally positive
- Coverage of Administration's perspective
- Negative articles allow for rebuttal
- Continually highlights political nature

Volume of Media Coverage

Coverage of “Affordable Care Act” in Top 50 Papers

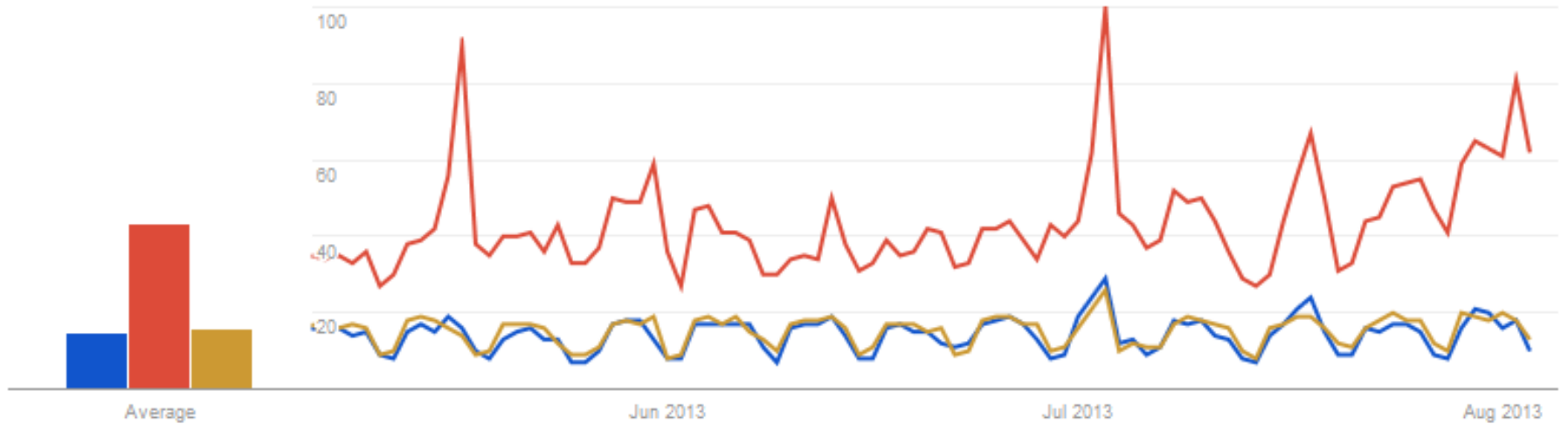


Search Volume

Interest over time ?

The number 100 represents the peak search interest

News headlines Forecast ?



Search terms ?

× affordable care

× obamacare

× ACA

+ Add term

Embed

A blue-tinted landscape photograph showing a vast field of crops, likely corn, stretching to a flat horizon. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. A dark blue rectangular box is centered in the middle of the image, containing the text "Refreshing the Narrative" in white.

Refreshing the Narrative



Child Success

Family Coverage

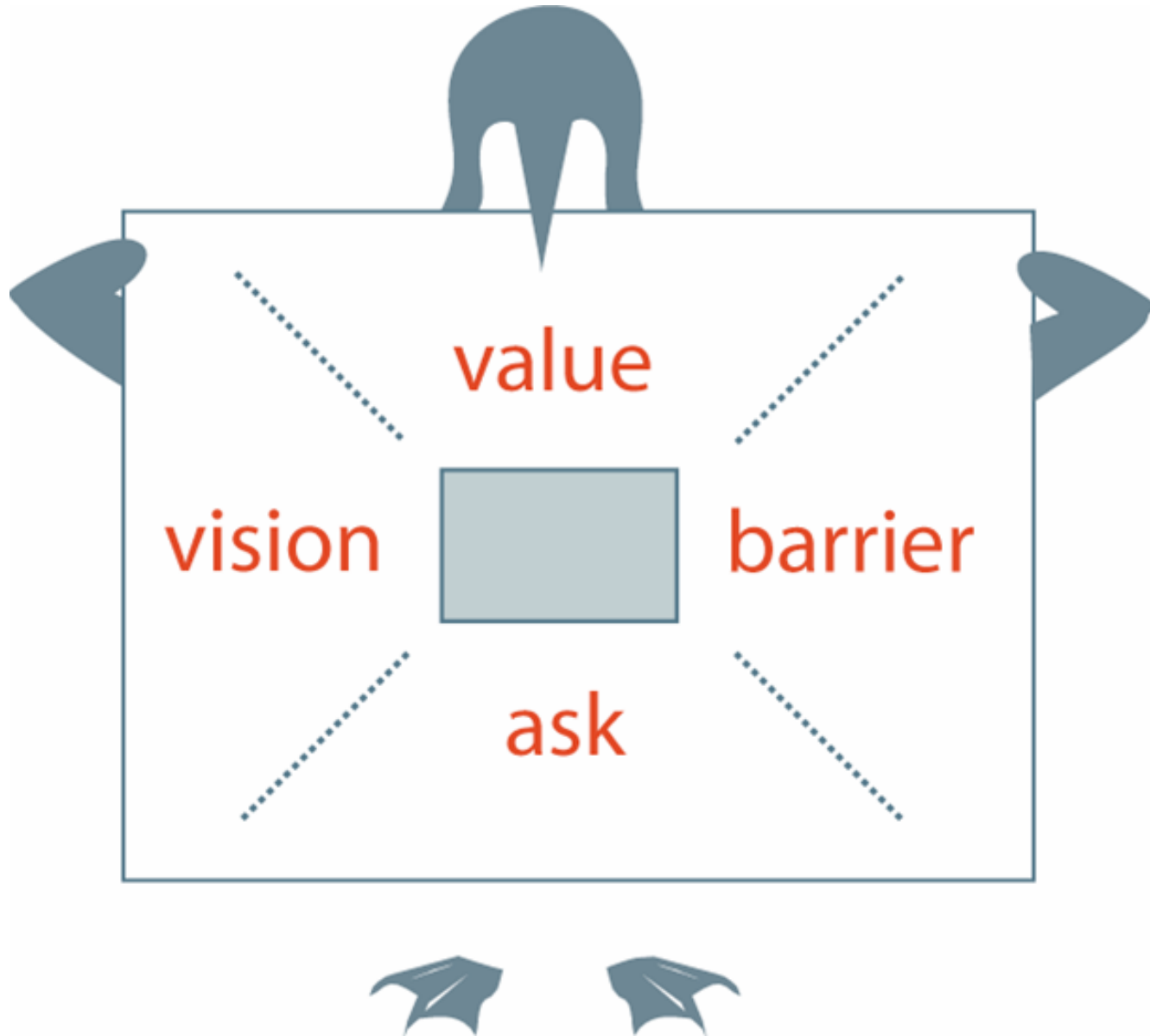
Family Economic Security



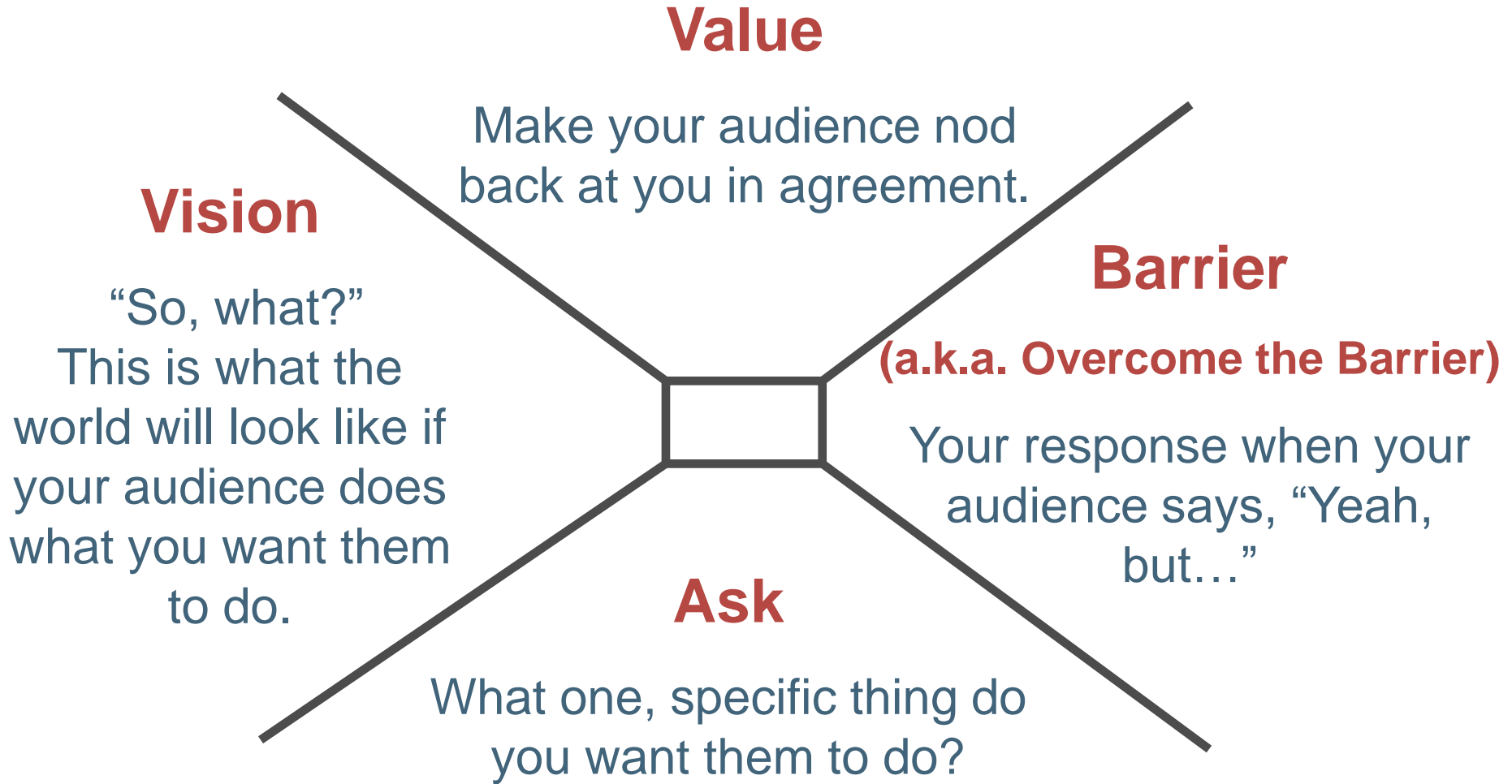
What's in the Messaging Document?

- Overarching Message Platform
- Implementation
- Path to Coverage
- Affordability of Coverage
- Benefits of Coverage
- Access to Care
- Responding to Critics

Values-Based Messaging



Message Box



New Health Insurance Marketplaces

[STATE] is making it easier to obtain and afford health insurance coverage for children and their families.

Bringing all children and their families into coverage will pave the way toward a better future for everyone in [STATE].

New coverage options will increase the economic security of working families and reduce burdens on our health care system.

Our health care system is strengthened by every family that gets covered so it's vital to [insert policy priority].



Message Support

- Data
 - Number of eligible families
 - Polling numbers
 - Economic benefits/job creation
- Stories
 - Uninsured child, parent or guardian
 - Family impacted by medical debt
- Solutions
 - Policy priority, e.g., outreach and enrollment, Navigators



Premiums and Cost-Sharing

Families juggle home budget priorities, including rent, groceries, gas and doctor's visits every day.

We can find a way to make sure every working family with a tight budget can afford quality health insurance.

Federal tax credits will help many families afford coverage, but they may not be enough for some.

Our leaders at the state and federal level should address these concerns so children aren't locked out of coverage.

Message Channels

- Offline
 - Issue papers, fact sheets, letters, comments
 - Speeches, testimony, interviews, meetings
 - Press releases, statements
 - Events
- Online
 - Website, blog, e-newsletter
 - Videos, images, infographics
 - Social media platforms

Joining an Existing Conversation Online

- Hashtags
 - #healthinsurance
 - #healthcare
 - #ACA
 - #Medicaid
 - #[STATE]
 - #investinkids
 - #[STATE LEGISLATURE]
- Mentions
 - @[EXCHANGE]
 - @[STATE LEADER]

A blue-tinted landscape photograph showing a vast field of crops in the foreground and middle ground, extending to a flat horizon. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. A dark blue rectangular box is centered in the middle of the image, containing the text "Questions?".

Questions?



1800 M Street, NW * Suite 300 North * Washington, D.C. 20036
P: 202-293-6200 * F: 202-293-6201 * E: info@spitfirestrategies.com

www.spitfirestrategies.com



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