

# Climate change communication:

## Grid of challenges and ways forward suggested in climate communication literature

### Version 1

Below is a sample of issues in climate communication and a brief outline of responses in the climate communication literature.

Note: much of the writing about climate change communication is derived from approaches in marketing, cognitive science and social psychology: less of it is grounded in the experience of the climate movement, This experience is reflected more in the sections towards the end of the table.

Aspect of climate change communication	Relevant authors	Examples of solutions	Solution suggested by
<b>Influencing public attitudes</b>			
The threat of climate change is perceived as <b>distant and remote</b>	Leiserowitz (2007)	Highlight potential local and regional climate change impacts	Leiserowitz
Climate change is perceived as <b>a threat happening far into the future</b>	Leiserowitz	Focus on the change that is happening now	Leiserowitz
Climate change is <b>not visible or experienced directly</b> (yet) in the same way that job losses, obesity, or traffic congestion are.	Dilling and Moser (2007)	Link to what people are already experiencing (See below)	
Climate change is <b>not linked to immediate personal concerns</b>	Leiserowitz	Highlight the potential impacts of climate change on human health and extreme weather events: coal dust, heatwave, bushfire...	Dennekamp 2010, Leiserowitz 2007, Spratt 2012
People do <b>not</b> see themselves as <b>personally at risk</b>	Leiserowitz	Again, link climate change to immediate personal concerns such as health	Spratt (2012)
People respond in different ways according to their <b>worldview</b>	Kahan, Leiserowitz	Tailor messages and messengers for particular interpretive communities	Leiserowitz Kahan (2010)
		Use credible messengers	Dilling and Moser (2007), Agyeman <i>et al.</i> (2007), and Meyer (2007)
The <b>facts are not imbued with meaning</b> that resonates with audiences	Westerhoff & Robinson (2013) Moser	Utilise narrative	Westerhoff & Robinson

		Draw on elite or expert defections from either quiescence or institutional politics	Meyer (2007)
need to <b>understand the 'audience'</b> more fully	Moser Leiserowitz	Audience research	Moser, Leiserowitz, Kahan (2013)
Addressing climate change is seen as a <b>threat to values and self-interests</b>	Dilling and Moser, Hamilton, Hulme, (2009) Oreskes and Conway (2010)		
<b>lack of vivid, concrete, and personally relevant affective images</b> of climate change	Leiserowitz Doyle (2007)	Use vivid, compelling images that condense the meaning of climate change	Jon Else in Climate One (2012) Doyle
<b>Climate change denial</b>	Weintrobe, Hamilton, Moser	Recognise this as a reality enable / support people to face anxiety about climate change	Weintrobe
<b>The focus of climate change communication</b>			
<b>Science is the wrong field</b> on which the battle should be waged	Hulme (2009)	Focus instead on risk management, of valuation, and political ideology.	Hulme
		Draw on the 'generative potential of affect, values, norms and political vision'	Rosewarne <i>et al.</i> 2013
<b>Messages which persuade climate activists may not resonate</b> with wider audience	Johnson	(1) devise messages to resonate with existing values of audience OR (2) avoid reinforcing consumerist/ negative values: reinforce altruistic values	(1) Chris Rose (2) Tom Crompton: Values and Frames
Highlighting the threat of climate change and relying on 'fear appeals' makes people <b>defensive</b>	Moser (2007) Leiserowitz	(1) Avoid fear appeals OR	Moser Leiserowitz
<b>Failing to highlight the threat</b> means that people will not see the need for action or support solutions to climate change	Spratt (2012)	(2) Be clear about the threat of climate change	Spratt, McKibben
<b>Lack of ethical focus</b> in the debate	McKibben (2013) McFague (2013) Weintrobe (2013) Hulme	Focus on values, a new ethical framework	McKibben, McFague, Weintrobe, Hulme, Crompton
<b>The politics of climate change</b>			

Ascendancy of <b>neoliberal ideology</b>	Hamilton (2012) Burgmann and Baer (2012)	Gear climate communication to political change Grasroots organising	Brulle, Cox Burgmann and Baer Ganz
People feel <b>disempowered</b>	Moser Norgaard	Focus on empowerment	Moser Meyer
<b>Lack of clarity</b> in climate movement demands	Meyer	Clear, strong, crystallized demands	Meyer
The climate debate has been <b>caught in the political polarisation</b> between right and left	Hamilton Kahan (2010) Brulle <i>et al.</i> (2012) Manne (2012)		
<b>Gearing communication to a political strategy</b>			
Communication <b>strategies are developed in isolation from a clear-sighted analysis of the politics</b> of climate change	Brulle Cox (2010)	Link communications strategy to a broader political strategy	Brulle, Cox
<b>Dominance of communication professionals</b> undermines mobilization	Brulle, Johnston (2012)	Political organising	Brulle, Cox
<b>Communication without movement mobilisation</b>	Brulle Cox McKibben	Integrate climate communication into a broader political and mobilisation strategy	Brulle Cox McKibben
simply <b>reframing an issue without addressing the basic causes of political and economic change won't alter entrenched power.</b>	Cox Brulle Jenkins	Link communication to a broader political strategy founded on community organising	Cox Brulle and Jenkins McKibben

Compiled by Don McArthur, Sept 2014

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